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Claremont McKenna College

Were the French government's Brexit-related worries prior to the 2016 referendum overstated?

submitted to
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by
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for
Senior Thesis
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Abstract

The prospect of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union during the 2016 Brexit referendum was deeply troubling to French officials. As a historic leader of the European integration project, the French government and media worried that Brexit would embolden Eurosceptics in France. This threatened to undermine France's identity as a pro-European nation. Also, due to France's position as one of the UK's main trading partners, French citizens and businesses feared that the end of freedom of movement between these countries would create burdensome legal and economic consequences. Nevertheless, more than three years have passed since the Brexit referendum and few of the French government's initial fears have manifested. This leads to the question of whether French worries over Brexit were overstated. This thesis examines the impact of Brexit on France's economy, security and attitudes toward the EU to argue that many of France's Brexit concerns were indeed exaggerated. While the French government should remain cautious of the resurgence of Euroscepticism should populist forces like the Rassemblement National regain support, evidence shows that it has adequately prepared for the economic and security implications of Brexit. By demonstrating France's current preparedness for the UK's departure, the author hopes to eliminate the Brexit-related worries still held by many French citizens.

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Introduction

The prospect of Brexit initially appeared as a crisis for the European Union. The United Kingdom's vote to leave on June 23, 2016 was the first time a member state decided to remove itself from the bloc. The departure of the UK threatened to undermine support for the EU in remaining member states, including France. One fear was that Brexit could set a precedent for leaving the EU with ease. Some of the remaining EU27 could become inspired to follow suit if the UK's exit left it financially better off and with greater control of its own borders and policies. Brexit could also empower growing Eurosceptic movements across Europe. This notion troubled the French government under Presidents Hollande and Macron because Eurosceptic voters had been gaining traction and were rallying behind Marine Le Pen, the leader of the right-wing Rassemblement National. Were France's growing number of Eurosceptics to follow in the footsteps of those in the UK, France's identity as a pro-EU nation could ultimately be compromised. Furthermore, the French government did not view Brexit favorably because it could lead to the end of the EU's integration project. EU integration is a process which involves the "pooling" of national sovereignty and decision-making powers to a larger political body.¹ By giving up jurisdiction over certain matters, such as international trade and currency, EU member states have created a supranational polity that superseded each individual member state. This is threatened by Brexit if remaining member states were to follow in the UK's footsteps and also vote to remove their countries out of the bloc. The EU's integration project is also threatened by the possibility of remaining member states feeling emboldened to "cherry pick," by insisting on the ability to decide what EU institutions and initiatives they to participate in. Brexit could make

¹ J. Peterson, "European integration," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. James Wright, 4923–4925. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/01261-4>.

the EU desperate to keep remaining member states that it has no choice but to concede to some of these demands. This situation could change the trajectory/ direction of European integration and contributes to why Brexit was not viewed enthusiastically by the French government.

The UK's exit was an especially pertinent issue in France because of these countries' geographic proximity and shared history. France is physically the second closest country after Ireland to the UK. The shortest distance between their borders, marked by the Strait of Dover, is a mere 20 miles apart.² In addition, these countries have been allies for over a century. They have demonstrated consistent and successful military cooperation since the signing of the Entente Cordiale in 1904. Brexit could pose problems to the existing bilateral Anglo-French relationship by making it more difficult for French citizens and businesses to live and work in the UK. This worry came about because ending free movement of labor with the EU was one of the driving motivations behind the 2016 Brexit Leave campaign. Indeed, France's people, economy and security could face adverse consequences should the UK stop participating in such EU initiatives. France is also one of the UK's largest trading partners; more French people and goods enter the UK annually than any other EU member state. The end of free labor movement with the UK could lead to the repatriation of thousands of French citizens and the inability of French businesses to continue operating in the UK. For France, this situation could mean reduced trade with the UK, shortages and delays of key products, and businesses failing. More worryingly still, these consequences could subvert French support for the EU and undermine its identity as a pro-European nation that encourages multilateral cooperation.

Despite these initial fears, more than three years have passed since the UK's decision to leave and both France and the EU are still intact. The French economy has not deteriorated due to

² "The Strait of Dover," Earth Observatory, NASA, last modified August 15, 2006, <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/6840/the-strait-of-dover>.

Brexit and its political arena has not been overrun by Eurosceptics. Although still a significant matter, Brexit appears to have shifted away from the forefront of the French government's agenda, all the more so given the impact of the pandemic emerging two months after the UK leaving the EU. Indeed, even before COVID-19, other crises affecting France, such as increasing levels of illegal migration, terrorism, and domestic protests led by the Yellow Vests, dominated over any potential fallout from Brexit. The apparently decreasing priority given to Brexit-related matters by the French government leads to the question of whether its initial worries were exaggerated. This thesis studies the impact of Brexit on France to answer this question. An impact analysis of the UK's departure on France is important because of their size and significance within the EU and also the aforementioned close ties between these two countries. Moreover, France has traditionally been a supporter of the EU and a leader of many of its multilateral initiatives. Due to this, France's (in)ability to cope with the consequences of Brexit can provide some insight into the EU's overall ability to handle this crisis.

The objective of this thesis is to verify the validity of the French government's Brexit-related worries to persuade the reader that Brexit will not negatively impact France as much as analysts initially predicted. Its purpose is to dispute the belief, held by many French citizens and some in the larger international community that Brexit is necessarily damaging for France. My thesis acknowledges that the EU will change as a result of the UK's exit. This is because those transactions and movements that were previously free for all French and EU citizens to make in the UK will no longer be available. This means that trading with the UK cannot be as frictionless as before. What my thesis seeks to assess is whether these changes are adaptable or substantially damaging for France. In this thesis I examine these initial worries alongside the measures taken by the French government to minimize these predicted impacts. This allows for an evaluation of

whether the country is adequately prepared to handle the consequences of the UK's departure. My argument is that the actual impact of Brexit on France is less severe than what analysts initially anticipated. Reflecting upon the UK's long-enduring transition period and slow negotiations with the EU, this thesis predicts that the Brexit will not inspire other EU governments to put forward referenda in their own nations. This is because the UK's exit has not proven to be easy nor economically beneficial. Also, I assert the UK still needs the EU at least as much as or even more than vice versa. The EU as an individual polity is an important player in the international stage and it will remain in the UK's interest to continue its close relationship with the bloc.

My thesis proceeds in the following way. Chapters 1 to 3 set the scene by establishing France as a pro-European nation that supports multilateral cooperation and integration within the bloc. It examines France's traditional role of leading the integration process to underline why its government strongly resisted the 2016 Brexit referendum. My thesis then looks at the behavior of the French government during the Brexit negotiations which commenced after the UK triggered Article 50 in March 2017. These chapters also underline the major consequences of Brexit that were forecasted to impact France and its citizens. Following this, Chapters 4–7 compare these predictions made before the 2016 Referendum to the actual impact of Brexit on France as seen today. Each of these chapters examine the consequences of the UK's departure on a) French attitudes toward the EU, b) French security and defense, c) the movement of French citizens and d) the movement of French goods and services in and out of the UK. Examining whether the French public became more or less Eurosceptic because of Brexit can reveal the firmness of France's support for the EU. Additionally, Brexit's impact on French security and defense must also be analyzed because not only is it a matter of national security, it is also an

area where France stands to lose much from Brexit. As the EU shares its defense capabilities and the UK is one of this initiative's largest benefactors, France and the EU's overall capabilities could be reduced if the UK discontinued its participation. It is also imperative to examine how Brexit impacts the freedom of French people and businesses to live and work in the UK. This is because ending free movement of labor with the EU was one of the main driving forces behind the British Leave campaign. Thus, looking at the new rules French entities must follow to operate in the UK can reveal whether France is ready and able to cope with this new status quo.

Chapter 1: France's role in European Integration

France's leading role in integration

European integration is one of the processes that transformed a war-torn Europe into what political scientist Karl Deutsch described as a “security community”³ after the end of World War II. Integration reduced support for nationalist movements in European member states and strengthened these countries' embrace for multilateralism.⁴ French leaders have been major influencers of this process from its inception.⁵ France was one of the six founding members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 with West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Belgium. In 1952 these nations established a common market for their coal and steel industries, which are integral for warfare, thereby greatly decreasing the probability of war between members states. In April 1961, the same six nations then went on to sign the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) which laid the blueprints for today's European Union. Consequently, France's historic role as founder and supporter of European integration explains its current government's approach to the EU and shapes its position on major challenges like Brexit.

As Lynch states, the importance of France's role in European integration is unquestionable. What scholars continue to argue over, however, is the reason behind French support for integration. Why did the French government repeatedly surrender its sovereignty over to a supranational European authority?⁶ In *The Uniting of Europe* (1958), Haas provides

³ Karl Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level* (New York: Doubleday, 1954), 41.

⁴ Bruno Formicola, “How European integration changed French power politics and transatlantic relations,” *My Country? Europe*, 25 January, 2019, <https://mycountryeurope.com/international-relations/french-integration-transatlantic/>.

⁵ Niilo Kauppi, “France's European Policy,” in *Democracy, social resources and political power in the European Union* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 51.

⁶ Frances M. B. Lynch, “France and European integration: from the Schuman Plan to economic and monetary union,” *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 1 (February 2004), 117.

one possible answer to this question. Haas notes that the ECSC was initially accepted by member states because it offered each state many different advantages.⁷ He implies the ECSC was founded on mutual benefits, instead of shared values or a shared supranational identity. Indeed, at the time of its conception, the ECSC was mutually beneficial for France and its neighbors in terms of economics and security. Creating a common market for the coal and steel industries between members could hasten post-war economic recovery as well as prevent a resurgence of German aggression by making warfare materially impossible. In the 1950s, these objectives were seen as crucial by a war-torn France that needed to recover from World War II and avoid any future conflicts with Germany and its other European neighbors. Since the creation of the ECSC was not based on shared values, Haas' theory also explains why the French government has since often acted to ensure that developments on the European level align with national objectives.⁸ More importantly, his theory gives a probable answer to why it was French leaders that called for the creation of the ECSC and instigated the process of integration in the first place.

French leaders emerge as champions of integration

The signing of the Treaty of Paris in April 1951 and the resulting establishment of the ECSC were the first steps in the integration of the European Union. These developments were inspired by the Schuman Declaration of 9 May 1950.⁹ On this day, then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman gave a speech in which he proposed integrating the Franco-German coal and steel industries. The reason behind this was that coal and steel were two elements necessary to

⁷ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: political, social and economical forces, 1950–1957* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), xxxiii.

⁸ Alain Guyomarch, Howard Machin and Ella Ritchie, *France in the European Union* (London: Palgrave, 1998), 17.

⁹ “The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950,” Official Website of the European Union, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en.

produce weapons and conduct war. On behalf of the French government, Schuman stated that merging these industries and placing them under a common High Authority would ensure the security of France and Germany by making war “not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.”¹⁰ Schuman’s speech was evidently well-received by officials from Germany as well as Italy and the Benelux countries. It quickly paved the way for Europe’s first supranational community.

Schuman’s contributions to European integration does not end there. Prior to making his famous declaration in 1950, Schuman played key roles in other initiatives that aimed to unite the foreign policies of European nations. For instance, he helped negotiate the agreements that led to the Marshall Plan in 1948 and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949. These initiatives utilized diplomatic and financial aid from the United States to encourage European political integration and ensure European safety from the threats posed by a rising Soviet Union.¹¹ Additionally, after the creation of the ECSC, Schuman went on to push for the creation of a European Defense Community in 1954. He also served as the first President of the European Parliament, the main legislative arm of the EU, from 1958–60. ¹² Today, Schuman is known as one of the founding fathers of the integration project and his declaration is regarded as the birth of the European Union.¹³ Thus, he serves as a reminder of early French enthusiasm for the European integration project.

Another prominent French leader who is renowned for his contributions to European integration is Jean Monnet. He was the first President of the High Authority of the European

¹⁰ Official Website of the European Union, “The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950.”

¹¹ “A short history of NATO,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/declassified_139339.htm.

¹² “Robert Schuman: the architect of the European integration project,” European Commission, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/robert_schuman_en.pdf.

¹³ European Commission, “Robert Schuman: the architect of the European integration project.”

Coal and Steel Community from 1952–55. Monnet was a French economic and political adviser who worked with Schuman to initiate the EU's integration process. While working for the French government in Algeria in August 1943, Monnet gave a speech on how Europe can achieve economic reconstruction and ensure a lasting peace after the end of the Second World War. He declared that “there will be no peace in Europe, if the states are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty... The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development. The European states must constitute themselves into a federation.”¹⁴ This speech inspired Schuman, who Monnet began working with in 1944 when he was charged with planning the French economy's post-WW2 rebuilding and revival process. This was when the two French leaders began developing the concept of a supranational European Community.

In addition, like Schuman, Monnet continued to push for further integration after the creation of the ECSC. Despite Schuman's failure to establish a European Defense Community, Monnet pushed to create the Action Committee for the United States of Europe. This committee was founded to re-invigorate support for integration and became a strong driving force for many integration-related projects, such as the EU's Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and Single Market.¹⁵ Monnet's reasoning for supporting integration, specifically that it would allow peace, prosperity and social development, emphasizes the argument that this project was only possible because of the mutual benefits it provided to its members.

¹⁴ “Jean Monnet's thoughts on the future (Algiers, 5 august 1943),” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, last modified July 5, 2016, https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/b61a8924-57bf-4890-9e4b-73bf4d882549/publishable_en.pdf.

¹⁵ “Jean Monnet: the unifying force behind the birth of the European Union,” European Commission, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/jean_monnet_en.pdf.

Charles de Gaulle, who was president of France from 1958–68, is also known as a driver of European integration. During his presidency De Gaulle worked to free European defense from what he perceived as an over-dependence on American and Soviet cooperation. In 1963 he achieved much progress in this regard through the signing of the Elysée Treaty between France and Germany. This treaty of friendship marked the end of decades of bitterness between the two countries and was a big step in the process of European integration. De Gaulle supported the notion of a united Europe but unfortunately pushed too strongly for French supremacy over the decision-making processes of the European Economic Community (EEC). This is evident, for example, by the failure of the Fouchet Plan in 1961. The Fouchet Plan was proposed by De Gaulle to the other EEC member states with the intention to achieve more intergovernmental cooperation through greater coordination of defense and foreign policies. However, this plan would have given the French government a disproportionately large amount of control over the EEC's institutional and foreign policy mechanisms.¹⁶ Hence, it was rejected by the EEC's other members. Additionally, under De Gaulle, France also vetoed British application for EEC membership twice in 1963 and 1967. In the 1960s, the French government did not want the UK as part of the EEC because it wanted to avoid a leadership challenge from the British government. The UK also had close military and diplomatic ties with the U.S., for instance in the nuclear sector, which France viewed unfavorably. De Gaulle did not think Britain's closeness to the U.S. would help Europe achieve his goal of having the capacity to independently defend itself. By drafting the Fouchet Plan and vetoing British accession De Gaulle's inadvertently placed France's national interests above the supranational interests of Europe.

¹⁶ Anthony Teasdale, "The Fouchet Plan: De Gaulle's intergovernmental design for Europe," *The LSE Europe in Discussion Paper Series* (24 October 2016), 16. <http://www.lse.ac.uk/european-institute/Assets/Documents/LEQS-Discussion-Papers/LEQSPaper117.pdf>

Nevertheless, the actions of De Gaulle's government do not discount the fact that it continued to support the idea of an independent and united Europe.¹⁷ Despite the failure of the Fouchet Plan, it is imperative to remember that this plan was initially created with the intention of furthering integration. Indeed, some of the proposals made by the Fouchet Plan are a common defense and foreign policy, the creation of a European Council, and the right of this council to draft the annual budget of the bloc.¹⁸ Thus, the failure of this plan because it disproportionately favored France does not negate the fact that it was intended to further the integration project. Similarly, French denial of British accession can be seen as a strategic means of preserving the then young and fragile EEC. On the one hand, De Gaulle blocked UK accession to preserve French supremacy within the EEC. However, on the other hand, this was also a way to ensure that the British predisposition to free trade did not impose itself on the EEC's fledgling Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP had only been introduced to the EEC in 1962 and it was primarily French pressure that forced agricultural policy to be included in the Treaty of Rome of 1957. Hence, the De Gaulle's rejection of British accession in favor of safeguarding the CAP can be seen as a way of protecting the then still fragile integration process.

As the economic integration of Europe was underway, EEC leaders looked for ways to improve and deepen the process even further. Jacques Delors, a French politician who served as the eighth president of the European Commission from 1985–95, was one of these leaders. As the Commission's longest service president, Delors led significant reforms that further advanced

¹⁷ Christos Lymbouris, "Charles De Gaulle: the impact of one historical figure and his opposition towards supranationalism on the process of European Integration," PB Works, last modified 2 May, 2010, <http://testpolitics.pbworks.com/w/page/20734319/The%20Role%20of%20De%20Gaulle%20in%20the%20Integration%20Process>.

¹⁸ "The Fouchet Plans," Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, accessed 31 January, 2020, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/a70e642a-8531-494e-94b2-e459383192c9>.

economic and political integration. For example, the first significant revision of the Treaty of Rome, the Single European Act (SEA), was signed in February 1986 under the Delors Commission. This agreement increased the legislative powers of the European Parliament by introducing voting and assent procedures and promised greater coordination of foreign policy. It also included the Community's intention of creating a single market by the end of 1992.¹⁹ The passing of the SEA is also significant because it served as a foundation for the EU's single market, which came into effect under the Maastricht Treaty of February 1992.²⁰

Furthermore, Delors contributed to the process of European integration by publishing the Report on Economic and Monetary Union in the European Community, otherwise called the Delors Report, in April 1989. In this report, his Commission set out the necessary steps and conditions needed to create a European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).²¹ The EMU had been one of the Community's ambitions from the late 1960s. During this time, the creation of a common currency, monetary and fiscal policy was viewed as a means of stabilizing the European economy and giving consumers more choice.²² The Delors Report made clear that the EEC had to achieve three conditions – full and irreversible currency convertibility, fixed exchange rates between member states' currencies and free movement of capital – to successfully adopt a single

¹⁹ "Single European Act," European Parliament, accessed 31 January, 2020, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/in-the-past/the-parliament-and-the-treaties/single-european-act>.

²⁰ "Treaty on European Union," European Commission and European Council, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf.

²¹ "Report on economic and monetary union in the European Community," Committee for the Study of Economic and Monetary Union, accessed on 31 January, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/pages/publication6161_en.pdf.

²² "History and purpose of the euro," Official Website of the European Union, accessed 31 January, 2020, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/euro/history-and-purpose-euro_en.

currency.²³ This report helped forward European integration by facilitating the birth of the euro. Delors' contributions to integration, specifically by initiating the creation of a single market, reiterate the presence of French support for this project throughout its progression. Understanding the influential role that Delors and the other aforementioned French leaders had on European integration underlines the French government's mostly firm support of this project since its early days.

The growth of Euroscepticism in France

As seen, French support for European integration up until De Gaulle's presidency (1959–1969) was relatively strong. This meant that, although French Eurosceptics existed, political opposition to integration remained “peripheral and/or exceptional” from the 1950s until the 1990s.²⁴ During this period, right-wing French political parties focused on the ideas of nationalism and nativism instead of Euroscepticism. The Rassemblement National (previously the Front National) which today is France's most successful right-wing Eurosceptic party, actually began as the Ordre Nouveau. The Ordre Nouveau was a racist and neofascist movement created in 1969 not with the intention of taking France out of the EU but to unite France's fragmented nationalist movements.²⁵ It only transformed into the Front National in 1972 to participate in the 1973 French general elections but did poorly and earned only 0.5% of the

²³ “The Delors Report,” Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe, last modified July 8, 2016, <https://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/021072be-929c-4ca0-ad76-32760b5dc2ff>.

²⁴ Nathalie Brack and Nicholas Startin, “Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream,” *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 3 (June 2015), 241. https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/24573389.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_SYC-4946%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A2dffe3324cdf52bc387d1d73ec66c5ec.

²⁵ Alexandre Dézé, *Le Front National: à la conquête du pouvoir ?* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012), 32.

vote.²⁶ The FN saw slow but steady growth over the next two decades. In 1984, three FN members were elected into the European Parliament and in 1988, Jean-Marie Le Pen won 14.38% of the vote in the first round of the French presidential elections. He even beat François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac in the first round of elections in Marseille that year. However, the FN still remained a fringe political party that was not seriously considered a threat by the socialist French government. Indeed, Perrineau argues that the FN's minor electoral successes in the 1980s were not due to the popularity of the party's politics.²⁷ Instead, these achievements can be attributed to the socioeconomic shifts, such as the trend of protest politics and the beginning of insecurities related to finance and immigration. Thus, although Eurosceptic parties like the FN have existed in France for many decades they were not prominent players in the French political scene even in the 1980s.

Only in the 1990s did the FN begin to involve itself in EU-level affairs. In 1992, the Maastricht Treaty referendum in France was only approved by 51% of voters.²⁸ This referendum led the FN to realize it could capitalize on growing Euroscepticism among the French public by including anti-EU rhetoric in its politics.²⁹ The party began making demands for the restoration of French sovereignty from the EU and the reduction of mandatory cooperation between member states. These efforts achieved some success in the presidential elections of 1995 when Jean-Marie Le Pen received 15% of the vote.³⁰ Nevertheless, it was only in the 2000s that FN gained

²⁶ Gilles Ivaldi and Jocelyn Evans, "The Front National (FN) in France," *Sub-national context and radical right support in Europe*, 14 February, 2018, <https://www.score.uni-mainz.de/2018/02/14/the-front-national-fn-in-france/>.

²⁷ Pascal Perrineau, *La France au front* (Paris: Fayard, 2014).

²⁸ Olivier Rozenberg, "Monnet for nothing? France's mixed Europeanisation," *Les Cahiers européens de Sciences Po*, no. 4 (December 2011): 3.

²⁹ Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis: The Front National and politics of Euroscepticism in France," *Political Studies Association*, vol. 38 no. 3 (2018): 281.

³⁰ Gilles Ivaldi and Jocelyn Evans, "The Front National (FN) in France."

popularity and began using explicitly anti-EU rhetoric to attract supporters. This was possible because a series of crises, which fueled distrust against the EU's institutions, affected France and the rest of Europe in this decade. The EU appeared incapable of adapting to changing global demands in the face of growing security and economic challenges.³¹ An influx of migrants from Africa and the Middle East and unprecedented security attack gave rise to Euroscepticism across Europe. In France, it also led to increased support for the FN. This was evident by the fact that in the 2002 French presidential elections, which occurred less than a year after 9/11, Jean-Marie Le Pen achieved 16.9% of the vote and qualified for the second round of voting for the first time.³² He even received more votes than the socialist party candidate, Lionel Jospin, in the first round. Although he wasn't elected as president, Le Pen and his party gained much public attention in these elections. According to Lebourg, the FN's ability to gain a surprisingly large number of votes in the first round of these elections reflect the increasingly fragile international security environment after the events of 9/11.³³ Lebourg believes that 9/11 marked the French public deeply and casted doubts over the ability of Europe to protect France's own borders and people. Hence, the FN's Eurosceptic beliefs gained popularity in France during the 2000s because a changing security environment casted doubts over the EU's ability to adequately protect the interests of its members.

Additionally, the FN also mobilized Eurosceptic voters in France to achieve success in its "no" campaign during the 2005 French referendum over the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. This referendum took place in all EU member states with the purpose of deciding

³¹ Jose Ignacio Torreblanca and Mark Leonard, "The continent-wide rise of Euroscepticism," *European Council on Foreign Relations*, no. 79 (May 2013): 4. https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79_EUROSCEPTICISM_BRIEF_AW.pdf.

³² Gilles Ivaldi and Jocelyn Evans, "The Front National (FN) in France."

³³ Nicolas Lebourg, *Lettres aux Français qui croient que cinq ans d'extrême droite remettraient la France debout* (Paris: Les Échappés, 2016).

whether each country should ratify the proposed EU Constitution. The Treaty would have increased the degree of legal and economic cooperation between member states and clarified decision making processes within the EU.³⁴ To President Chirac's disappointment, the "no" campaign won with 55% of the vote and France became the first EU member state to fail to ratify this treaty.³⁵ Similar to the FN's success after 9/11, the FN's success in this campaign can be traced back to an increasingly fragile security environment. Franck argues the referendum over the Treaty establishing Constitution for Europe failed in France because right wing politicians successfully provoked public fear over relinquishing more national sovereignty over to the EU. The author asserts that French citizens did not oppose the Treaty itself but rather the possibility that further endorsing free movement between European borders would promote immigration from Eastern Europe, undercutting of labor costs, and loss of national sovereignty over these matters.³⁶ The FN's campaign, which focused on the possibility of these fears materializing, successfully primed and convinced French voters to vote against the deepening of integration.³⁷ This was possible because these aforementioned fears were very real for French citizens, who were still waiting for Chirac's government to improve the country's troubled economy after being in office for over a decade. Hence, the prospect of losing their "cradle-to-

³⁴ "Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe," *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*, 29 November, 2010.

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/industrial-relations-dictionary/treaty-establishing-a-constitution-for-europe>.

³⁵ Elaine Sciolino, "French voters soundly reject European Union Constitution," *The New York Times*, 30 May, 2005, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/30/world/europe/french-voters-soundly-reject-european-union-constitution.html>.

³⁶ Raphaël Franck, "Why did a majority of French voters reject the European Constitution?" *European Journal of Political Economy* 21, no. 4 (December 2005), 1074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2005.09.004>.

³⁷ Sara Binzer Hobolt and Sylvain Brouard, "Contesting the European Union? Why the Dutch and French rejected the European Constitution," *Political Research Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (June 2011), 316. https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/23056393.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_expensive%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3A757e541b07acec75622b07796a9d7664.

grave social safety net” by handing decision making powers to the EU in an increasingly fragile security environment fueled distrust against the EU among French voters.³⁸ It was this environment in the 2000s that prompted the FN’s Eurosceptic rhetoric to gain traction in France.

The EU’s reputation received another blow when it was struck with the Eurozone crisis. Greece’s inability to repay its sovereign debts to the EU in 2009 incited a great loss of confidence in its institutions. In that year, Greece’s annual budget deficit stood at 12.9%, which is more than four times the permissible EU limit of 3%.³⁹ The problem arose when Greece could not simply print more bills to repay these debts because it had adopted the euro with other EU states as their currency in 2001. Hence, the EU had no choice but to request bailouts for Greece from the IMF and European Central Bank (ECB). Unfortunately, this approach did not stop the sovereign debt crisis from spreading across the eurozone because many banks in other EU member states had invested heavily in Greek enterprises. Soon, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland raised alarms over their dangerous overspending and real estate bubbles. By this point, the Eurozone crisis had led to questions over the feasibility of the euro and of economic integration more generally. In France these feelings of distrust against the EU grew to the point that, in 2013, 59% of French citizens surveyed felt that their voices do not count in the EU.⁴⁰ Similarly in another survey, 69% of French people said they had a favorable view of the EU in

³⁸ Elaine Sciolino, “French voters soundly reject European Union Constitution.”

³⁹ “The Bank of Greece Report on Monetary Policy 2009–2010,” *Bank of Greece*, 22 March, 2010, <https://www.bankofgreece.gr/en/news-and-media/press-office/news-list/news?announcement=3709adc7-d5bd-4ad8-9560-97540683239e>.

⁴⁰ “Standard Eurobarometer 80,” *European Commission* (December 2013), 8. https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_first_en.pdf.

2004 while only 41% shared this view in 2013.⁴¹ Therefore, the Eurozone crisis escalated Euroscepticism in France by creating distrust in the euro and in the direction of integration.

Increasing Euroscepticism in France during the 2000s and 2010s manifested as increasing support for the FN, which had grown to become France's most successful right-wing party under the leadership of Marine Le Pen. Since Jean-Marie's replacement in 2011, the FN had grown in number and notoriety. The party rebranded itself as a Eurosceptic defender of France's national interests and, because the French electorate was also becoming increasingly Eurosceptic, managed to achieve some electoral successes.⁴² In 2012, Marine Le Pen won 17.9% of the votes in the French presidential elections. And in 2014, she polled 25% against incumbent President Hollande's 14%.⁴³ These results demonstrate the success of Le Pen's strategy of demonizing the EU and capitalizing on growing Eurosceptic sentiments in France. Moreover, Hollande's description of these results as a vote of mistrust against Europe" confirms how, by this point, Euroscepticism among French voters had become a tangible problem for the country's government.⁴⁴ The growth of this problem is underlined in a survey conducted in May 2015 in which 44% of French people said they were pessimistic about the EU's future and 50% said they were optimistic about the EU's future.⁴⁵ The small difference in these values demonstrates the extent of the French public's dissatisfaction with the EU. Brexit threatens to undermine French support for integration by setting a successful example of allowing Eurosceptic sentiments to

⁴¹ Richard Wike, Jacob Poushter, et al., "European public opinion three decades after the fall of communism," *Pew Research Center*, 14 October, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/10/14/the-european-union/>.

⁴² Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis: The Front National and politics of Euroscepticism in France," 280.

⁴³ Nathalie Brack and Nicholas Startin, "Euroscepticism, from the margins to the mainstream," 240.

⁴⁴ François Hollande, "L'Europe, elle est devenue illisible, j'en suis conscient," *Libération*, 26 May, 2014, https://www.liberation.fr/france/2014/05/26/apres-la-debacle-hollande-s-explique_1027477.

⁴⁵ "Standard Eurobarometer 83," *European Commission* (May 2015), T88, https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_anx_en.pdf.

drive the country out of the EU. The success of the 2016 Brexit referendum could potentially embolden supporters of Marine Le Pen in the 2017 French presidential elections and put France's identity as a pro-European nation at risk. Thus, despite being a founding member of the EU, France's support for integration has wavered in the last decade because of growing Euroscepticism that has translated to votes for domestic right-wing political parties. This understanding helps explain why, currently, Macron's pro-European government is determined to maintain France's support for Europe.

Current attitudes toward integration

Today, French citizens enjoy a large degree of freedom to live and work across the EU. Over 70 years of peace between members have proven that war has indeed become "not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible." Integration, which began as a guarantee against renewed German aggression after the Second World War, has led to peace by neutralizing the threat of any one nation's hegemony.⁴⁶ Clearly, the EU has produced many meaningful benefits for France. This helps explain why the trend of supporting European integration is continued by France's current government. Since his election, President Macron has repeatedly demonstrated his support for the integration project. Due to his country's history as a supporter of European integration and his position as leader of the liberal pro-EU party, La République en Marche, the current French government under Macron is reluctant to support any acts that imply disintegration. In regard to the UK's departure from the EU, this stance is evident through the

⁴⁶Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Daniel Verdier, "European integration as a solution to war," *European Journal of International Relations* 11 no. 1 (2005): 127, <https://polisci.osu.edu/sites/polisci.osu.edu/files/European%20integration%20as%20a%20solution%20to%20war.pdf>.

French government's resistance to Brexit, its tough stance during the Brexit negotiations and its continued push for greater integration despite Brexit.

The prospect of Brexit was openly resisted by the French government. In the run up to the 2016 referendum, then President François Hollande was accused in the media of “scaremongering” the British and French public.⁴⁷ This accusation came after his announcements that Brexit could have grave consequences for the EU's single market, financial trade and development. Hollande also warned of the potential consequences on the movement of goods between France and the UK through the Calais border. Similarly, then Economy Minister Macron described Brexit as the “Guernseyfication of the UK.”⁴⁸ In saying this, Macron means that by voting to leave the EU, the UK risks self-isolation and positioning itself as “a trading post and arbitration place at Europe's border.”⁴⁹ Aside from the harms it would inflict on itself, Macron also worried about Brexit's potential impact on the EU. In an interview with *Time*, Macron stated that Brexit threatens to undo the entire bloc by starting a chain reaction of exit referendums.⁵⁰ The editorial staff at *Le Monde*, a newspaper created at the behest of Charles De Gaulle, also shared Macron's views about Brexit. In an editorial published in English, *Le Monde's* writers stated “don't do it” in reference to the Brexit referendum. In an interview by the *New York Times*, Sylvia Kauffmann, the editorial director of *Le Monde*, explained the editorial

⁴⁷ “EU referendum: Hollande warns of UK exit consequences,” BBC News, last modified 3 March, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-35712463>.

⁴⁸ Armand Leparmentier, Christophe Ayad and Alain Salles, “Macron: nous devons délivrer l'Europe de ce qu'elle est devenue,” *Le Monde*, 18 June, 2016, https://www.lemonde.fr/referendum-sur-le-brexit/article/2016/06/18/macron-nous-devons-delivrer-l-europe-de-ce-qu-elle-est-devenue_4953300_4872498.html.

⁴⁹ Matthew Weaver and Patrick Wintour, “UK can expect Macron to be tough on Brexit, key adviser warns,” *The Guardian*, 8 May, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/08/uk-can-expect-macron-to-be-tough-on-brexit-key-adviser-warns>.

⁵⁰ Vivienne Walt, “French economy minister warns Brexit vote could splinter EU,” *Time*, 20 June, 2016, <https://time.com/4374548/brexit-eu-referendum-emmanuel-macron/>.

as a product of her team seeing Brexit as an “absurd possibility” and “a threat for France and for Europe.”⁵¹ Hence, the pro-EU stance of Macron’s government and the French media demonstrate how French support for integration remained in the period before the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Continued French support for European integration is also evident by the government’s tough stance in the Brexit negotiations. Since the start of the negotiations in March 2017 French leaders have maintained this stance with the remaining EU27. Together, the EU has insisted that Britain cannot remain in the single market without guaranteeing continued free movement and demanded concessions, such as the payment of a “divorce bill,” from the British government.⁵² The French economic adviser Jean Pisani-Ferry explains the EU’s united stance in dealing with Brexit not as seeking to punish the UK but as a necessary means to strengthen the remaining bloc.⁵³ Macron and other EU leaders did not want Brexit to create a precedent for leaving the EU nor the European public to think they condoned the UK’s decision. Furthermore, they did not want to provoke the growth of populist parties within their own borders by allowing the UK an “easy” departure. The EU’s hardline approach to Brexit was successful in maintaining the bloc’s unity. The inability of ex-Prime Minister May’s government to divide member states and earn greater concessions in the Brexit negotiations has left the UK with a large divorce bill and many legal uncertainties for its citizens and businesses.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the economic decline and

⁵¹ Alissa J. Rubin, “In English, French paper urges Britain to heed Waterloo and stay om EU,” *The New York Times*, 19 June, 2015, [https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/world/europe/le-monde-waterloo-
napoleon-britain-european-union-brexit.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/20/world/europe/le-monde-waterloo-napoleon-britain-european-union-brexit.html).

⁵² Dan Roberts, Daniel Boffey and Jennifer Rankin, “Brexit: UK caves in to EU demand to agree divorce bill before trade talks,” *The Guardian*, 20 June, 2017, [https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/19/uk-caves-in-to-eu-demand-to-agree-divorce-bill-
before-trade-talks](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/19/uk-caves-in-to-eu-demand-to-agree-divorce-bill-before-trade-talks).

⁵³ Matthew Weaver and Patrick Wintour, “UK can expect Macron to be tough on Brexit, key adviser warns,” *The Guardian*, 8 May, 2017, [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/08/uk-can-expect-
macron-to-be-tough-on-brexit-key-adviser-warns](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/08/uk-can-expect-macron-to-be-tough-on-brexit-key-adviser-warns).

⁵⁴ Matthew Weaver and Patrick Wintour, “UK can expect Macron to be tough on Brexit, key adviser warns.”

political turmoil the UK has experienced since 2016 have left Eurosceptics in other EU member states questioning the wisdom of leaving the EU. Thus, because of the fact that Brexit threatened European unity and to disrupt the integration process, the French government committed to an unwavering stance in the Brexit negotiations.

Finally, France's continued support for integration is clear from President Macron's numerous attempts at leading the integration process. Macron is currently serving as French president in a time when Europe risks strategic irrelevance because of a growing China and an increasingly undependable U.S.⁵⁵ Due to this the president perceives Brexit and other marking events, such as Trump's election, as evidence of a changing international system in which the EU is falling behind.⁵⁶ This helps understand Macron's recent calls for a sovereign Europe that is reminiscent of those made by De Gaulle. Clearly, a Europe capable of protecting its own people and borders is something the president views as necessary in lieu of the growing challenges from China and the U.S. Macron's proposals were echoed by German Chancellor Merkel in a December 2019 call for a Conference on the Future of Europe which the two leaders issued together. The scale of the conference they propose, which will bring together the EU Commission, Parliament and European Council, is indicative of the ambitious reforms these leaders have in mind.⁵⁷ Furthermore, on 22 January 2020, Macron and Merkel signed the Aachen

⁵⁵ Benjamin Haddad, "Emmanuel Macron's new strategy is disruption," *Foreign Policy*, 11 December, 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/11/nato-eu-emmanuel-macrons-new-strategy-is-being-a-jerk/>.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Haddad, "Emmanuel Macron's new strategy is disruption."

⁵⁷ Dermot Hodson and Imelda Maher, "France and Germany have big plans for EU reforms. Is this the right time?" *The Washington Post*, 6 December, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/12/06/france-germany-have-big-plans-eu-reforms-is-this-right-time/>.

Treaty. This act re-invigorated the Franco-German alliance that was first solidified under the Elysée Treaty and which proved to be a catalyst for European integration.⁵⁸

Macron's peculiar pro-integration stance also explains why his government vetoed the accession of Albania and North Macedonia into the EU at a European Council meeting in October 2019. A few days after this veto, the French government released a revised proposal for these countries' accessions. The government demanded more stringent conditions regarding rule of law and included a section on the possibility of reversing the accession process should Albania or North Macedonia show a lack of progress.⁵⁹ The French government's treatment of Albanian and North Macedonian accession is evidence of Macron's priority to strengthen the remaining EU members after Brexit. Recent enlargements of the EU have not led to thriving young democracies but, instead, the rise of populist leaders such as Hungary's Victor Orban. Hence, Macron's vision of integration involves focusing on strengthening the EU's current members instead of enlarging membership of the bloc.⁶⁰ This shows how Macron supports Europe but, like De Gaulle, risks being antagonized by other EU leaders for over-imposing French leadership in EU decision making. Moreover, Macron's legitimacy on the European stage is threatened by the Yellow Vest uprisings in France.⁶¹ Macron's approval rating dropped to his lowest at 23% in December 2018, a month after the start of the Yellow Vest protests. In July 2019, it had only recovered to 32%. Due to his poor approval ratings, there has been growing

⁵⁸ "Franco-German Treaty of Aachen," French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, accessed on 31 January, 2020, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/germany/france-and-germany/franco-german-treaty-of-aachen/>.

⁵⁹ Dermot Hodson and Imelda Maher, "France and Germany have big plans for EU reforms. Is this the right time?"

⁶⁰ Dimitar Bechev, "Did Macron kill the EU enlargement dream?" *Al Jazeera*, 23 October, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/macron-kill-eu-enlargement-dream-191023072639960.html>.

⁶¹ Matthew Karnitschnig, "The rise and fall of Macron's European revolution," *Politico*, 12 May, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-europe-revolution-rise-and-fall/>.

doubt over whether Macron can continue to rely on the support of French voters to further the European integration project.⁶²

This chapter has examined France's past and present role in the European integration process. As explored, France has contributed to this process since it first materialized as the ECSC. In the 1950s, the French government endorsed integration by placing the Franco-German coal and steel industries under a Common Authority because it offered France many economic and security benefits. In fact, it was under the leadership of Frenchmen Schuman and Monnet that the idea of merging these industries first gained traction among European leaders. Since then French leaders, like De Gaulle and Delors, have continued to influence the direction of integration. However, the soundness of French support for integration has wavered due to the growth of Euroscepticism among the French public. Since the turn of the millennium, financial crises and security threats have afflicted France and led to increasing support for the far right and Eurosceptic Rassemblement National. The growth of this party and Le Pen's potential to become France's president in 2017 threatened the country's position as a pro-European nation. Nevertheless, in the face of Brexit, ex-president Hollande and current president Macron have continued endorsing the EU's integration project. The French government's pro-EU stance is evident by its resistance to the 2016 Brexit referendum, its tough stance in the Brexit negotiations and Macron's attempts to take charge of the integration process. Thus, France's history as a founder of the ECSC and staunch supporter of integration explains why its government would worry over any potential undoing of this process. This is especially so

⁶² Gregory Viscusi, "Macron's approval rating continues to rise, French poll shows," *Bloomberg*, 20 July, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-07-21/macron-s-approval-rating-continues-to-rise-french-poll-shows>.

because Brexit occurred alongside the rise of France's own Eurosceptic Marine Le Pen. This understanding sheds some light on why Brexit, which implies the disintegration of the EU, caused great worries for French officials.

Chapter 2: Why France resisted the 2016 Brexit referendum

Unpreparedness

While a member of the EU, the UK was often described as its “awkward partner” because of its early reluctance to join the bloc, its distinct culture, and its geographic isolation from mainland Europe.⁶³ Reservations about the EU’s supranational and technocratic governing system led the UK to gain membership only in 1967, after it faced a decade of declining global influence and economic slowdown.⁶⁴ The UK also did not adopt the euro when it was first circulated in 1999. This shows how the British government has maintained its reluctance to support the strengthening of the bloc at the expense of its own sovereignty since the start of its EU membership.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, despite the UK’s notorious “awkwardness” toward the bloc, the EU remained unprepared for Brexit.

The first reason for this is that EU officials did not expect the British Leave campaign to succeed in the 2016 Brexit referendum. The unforeseen success of the Brexit referendum has been attributed to inaccurate polling and election forecasting.⁶⁶ Indeed, live polls that were analyzed just five hours before the results of the referendum were to be announced on 23 June,

⁶³ Roch Dunin-Wasowicz, “A not so awkward partner: the UK has been a champion of many causes in the EU,” *The London School of Economics Blogs* (London), 15 April, 2016, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/04/15/a-not-so-awkward-partner-the-uk-has-been-a-champion-of-many-causes-in-the-eu/>.

⁶⁴ “Why did the UK join the EU?” *The Week* (London), 20 March, 2019, <https://www.theweek.co.uk/100313/why-did-the-uk-join-the-eu>.

⁶⁵ Ian Wishart, “The European Union is going to miss the UK when its gone,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 16 January, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-01-16/the-eu-is-going-to-miss-the-u-k-when-it-s-gone>.

⁶⁶ Pamela Duncan, “How the pollsters got it wrong on the EU referendum,” *The Guardian*, 24 June, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/how-eu-referendum-pollsters-wrong-opinion-predict-close>.

2016, showed more support for Remain than Leave.⁶⁷ Additionally, betting markets on this day predicted that the Remain campaign had an 88% chance of defeating the Leave campaign.⁶⁸ These types of predictions contributed to the failure of many political analysts to foresee the referendum's final results, in which Leave gathered 51.9% and Remain 48.1% of the vote. Experts had also failed to predict how many British citizens would vote. Indeed, this referendum attracted a voter turnout of 72.2%, which is the highest that the UK has seen in over two decades.⁶⁹ As a result, Cohn argues that many of these “well-educated, establishment-minded analysts” did not take into account the tendency of undecided and uninformed voters to support unprecedented and extreme policy changes.⁷⁰ Had these analysts seriously considered the results of all 35 Brexit surveys taken in June 2016, they would find that 17 these surveys predicted victory for Leave while only 15 said the same about Remain. Hence, the results of the Brexit referendum took many EU officials by surprise because polls and surveys taken on the day of the vote led them to believe Remain would triumph over Leave. Therefore, the EU failed to predict the behavior of undecided British voters and did not foresee the success of the British Leave campaign.

The French government was also unprepared for the Brexit because it knew the EU is a stubborn negotiator and anticipated difficulties in reaching a unanimous agreement on the UK's terms of exit. The EU is often stubborn when negotiating with third party states because its

⁶⁷ Lianna Brinded and Will Martin, “EU referendum blog: Britain votes for Brexit,” *Business Insider*, 23 June, 2016, <https://www.businessinsider.com/eu-referendum-results-brexitexit-polls-analysis-vote-counting-2016-6>.

⁶⁸ Nate Cohn, “Why the surprise over Brexit? Don’t blame the polls,” *The New York Times*, 24 June, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/25/upshot/why-the-surprise-over-brexite-dont-blame-the-polls.html>.

⁶⁹ Robert Hutton, “The roots of Brexit,” *Bloomberg*, 31 January, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/quicktake/will-uk-leave-eu>.

⁷⁰ Nate Cohn, “Why the surprise over Brexit? Don’t blame the polls.”

position needs to reflect a compromise made by all its members. This means that even agreeing on a stance over the UK's exit promised to be an arduous task. For instance, although the French government wanted the EU to maintain a hard stance in the Brexit negotiations, it needs to ensure that other EU governments also agreed with this approach. Another example of when compromising between member states can be a hindrance to France achieving its own objectives is in negotiating post-Brexit trade deals with the UK. As Oliver argues, negotiations for the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Canadian European Trade Agreement (CETA) have already demonstrated how hard it is for the EU to secure the agreement of its member states. This is because each member state must gain public support to ratify any EU deal nationally, and in accordance with their own legal and political systems, before it can be ratified on an EU-level.⁷¹ Such a procedure is lengthy and does not always lead to unanimous agreements. This knowledge is worrying for the French government because it understands that failure to reach a trade agreement with the UK would have detrimental effects on their country. As the EU would be forced to treat the UK as a third-party country under WTO regulation, French goods and services entering the UK would be subject to a new set of more costly regulations. Hence, the French government resisted Brexit because it knew that deciding on what types of future relationship the remaining EU27 will share with the UK would be difficult. Brexit challenges the EU's ability to compromise between the needs of its member states and its belief in the idea of an "ever closer union."

Finally, the EU was unprepared for Brexit as it is the first time Article 50 has been invoked. The EU has never before negotiated or managed the exit of a member state of the UK's

⁷¹ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the European Union?" in *The Political Economy of Brexit*, edited by David Bailey and Leslie Budd (United Kingdom: Agenda Publishing, 2017), 162. https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/j.ctv5cg96v.14.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_SYC-4946%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Aa2c079351f1044f213998b3ecb5a2cf7.

size. Although Algeria, Greenland, and Saint Barthelemy have all withdrawn from the EU, these territories broke links with the bloc after gaining independence from a colonizing country or being annexed by non-EU member states.⁷² This makes the UK's decision to leave the EU and Theresa May's withdrawal notification on March 29, 2017, unprecedented. In fact, the EU did not even prepare for the exit of any of its members until the 2000s. It was only at the 2002 European Convention that Eastern European states, which were preparing to join the EU as part of its 2004 enlargement, pushed for the creation of a right to exit the EU. This demand was supported by the EU's increasingly Eurosceptic member states such as the UK and Denmark.⁷³ Their demand led to the creation of Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union, which was enacted in December 2009 by the Treaty of Lisbon. Article 50 is the EU's first procedure for voluntary withdrawal. This Article gives EU member states the right to withdraw from the bloc "in accordance with its own constitutional requirements" but is extremely vague about the steps in which this withdrawal is to occur.⁷⁴ Although the Article states that "the [European] Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that [withdrawing] State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union," it does not clarify what needs to be discussed and how specific these negotiations should be. As seen, French officials resisted Brexit because they were unprepared for the UK to depart. There were also no precedents the bloc could follow to manage this crisis.

⁷² "Exiting the EU? Algeria, Greenland and Saint Barthelemy experiences," *Nationalia* (Catalonia), 23 February, 2016, <https://www.nationalia.info/new/10722/exiting-the-eu-algeria-greenland-and-saint-barthelemy-experiences>.

⁷³ Martijn Huysmans, "Enlargement and exit: the origins of Article 50," *European Union Politics* 20, no. 2 (2019): 155. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1465116519830202>.

⁷⁴ "Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union. Title VI: Final Provisions," Office Journal of the European Union, last modified 26 October, 2012. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012M050>

Ideological worries

The 2016 Brexit referendum was also opposed by the French government because the UK's departure from the EU threatened to diminish French support for the European project. This threat exists because Brexit confirmed that the EU continues to hold itself together through mutual benefits.⁷⁵ In the previous chapter I elaborated on Haas theory of how the EU was initially accepted because it offered various benefits to its members. Although Haas' model facilitated the beginning of the European integration process, it is not one that can guarantee the longevity of the EU. This current model relies too heavily on each member state's individual perception of the EU. This explains why member states, such as the UK, become compelled to leave the bloc when they perceive the benefits of EU membership as being outweighed by its costs. In *The Uniting of Europe*, Haas also argued that a supranational identity can be developed if "the crucial expectations, ideologies, and behavior patterns of certain key groups can be successfully refocused" on a new set of centralized European symbols and institutions.⁷⁶ However, Brexit underlines that this identity has not been formed. On 31 January 2020, just hours before the final Brexit deadline, Macron described the UK's Leave campaign as being based on "lies, exaggerations, and simplifications, of cheques that were promised and will never arrive" in a televised public address. He went on to say Brexit was only possible "because, too often, we made Europe the scapegoat of our own difficulties."⁷⁷ Macron's statements support the argument that the Leave Campaign succeeded in making the British public feel that the benefits

⁷⁵ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: political, social and economical forces, 1950–1957* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), xxxiii.

⁷⁶ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: political, social and economical forces, 1950–1957* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 148.

⁷⁷ Elisa Braun, "Macron: Brexit campaign based on 'lies' but EU must reform," *Politico*, last modified 31 January, 2020, <https://www.politico.eu/article/macron-brexit-campaign-based-on-lies-but-eu-must-reform/>.

of EU membership were not worth its costs. Indeed, the Brexit Leave campaign capitalized on fears of immigration being out of control and taking away blue-collar jobs from UK workers by promising huge cuts in immigration.⁷⁸ The campaign made impossible promises, such as to slash immigration rates into the UK, that convinced the majority of British voters to leave the EU.⁷⁹ Hence, the success of the Leave campaign underlines a weakness in the way the EU holds itself together. The French government resisted Brexit because of the possibility that it could have mobilized similar movements to leave the EU in France and also in other EU member states.

Second, Brexit threatened to undermine support for Europe in France by confirming the EU's failure to erode national identity and replace it with, or make it second to, a shared European identity. The EU's attempts to establish a supranational "European identity" to promote an "ever closer union" of European people can be traced back to the 1990s.⁸⁰ The European Commission desired the creation of this identity because they saw it as a necessary addition to the EU's economic union, which was growing closer after several treaty revisions. During the Brexit referendum, the Leave campaign achieved success partly because of its focus on regaining control of the UK's laws on money and immigration. In June 2016, 48% of British people surveyed identified immigration as the UK's top concern.⁸¹ The Leave campaign exploited xenophobic and nationalist sentiments that had been growing in the UK due to

⁷⁸ Kim Moody, "Was Brexit a working-class revolt?" *Solidarity*, last modified October 2016, <https://solidarity-us.org/atc/184/p4771/>.

⁷⁹ Alan Travis, "The leave campaign made three key promises – are they keeping them?" *The Guardian*, 27 June, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/27/eu-referendum-reality-check-leave-campaign-promises>.

⁸⁰ Cris Shore, "Inventing the 'People's Europe': critical approaches to European Community cultural policy," *Man* 28, no. 4 (December 1993), 780. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2803997?seq=1>.

⁸¹ Gideon Skinner, "Immigration is now the top issue for voters in the EU referendum," *Ipsos MORI*, 16 June, 2018, <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/immigration-now-top-issue-voters-eu-referendum>.

increasing immigration levels over the last several decades.⁸² For example, it exacerbated public fears over Eastern European immigrants taking away blue-collar jobs from British citizens.⁸³ The campaign's efforts were successful in motivating this particular group to vote Leave and is evident by the fact that working-class British people disproportionately voted Leave in the Brexit referendum.⁸⁴ The success of the Leave campaign demonstrates how the UK failed to fully embrace the supranational European identity. This failure worried France, which had also been facing similar problems of growing xenophobia because of an unprecedented rise in immigration levels. In August 2016, 54% of French people surveyed agreed that immigration was "causing their country to change in ways they don't like." This figure is 8% higher than the global average of 46% and contributed to France being one of the world's most anti-immigration countries that year.⁸⁵ Thus, because Brexit demonstrated an EU member state's rejection of the European identity, French officials worried that Eurosceptics in their own country would be inspired to follow suit.

As explored, the results of the 2016 Brexit referendum were linked to a resurgence of nationalist and xenophobic sentiments in the UK. The possibility of this resurgence also occurring in France worried the country's pro-European socialist government. One of the ways this spill-over effect could manifest in France is as support for the Eurosceptic Front National. This party's growth in the last decade and its public support for the British Leave campaign made the French government fear that Brexit could lead to the FN's consolidation of power. The

⁸² Zack Beauchamp, "Brexit isn't about economics. It's about xenophobia," *Vox*, 24 June, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/23/12005814/brexit-eu-referendum-immigrants>.

⁸³ Kim Moody, "Was Brexit a working-class revolt?"

⁸⁴ E.A. Crunden, "Brexit was sold as a victory for the working class. It isn't." *Think Progress*, 24 June, 2016, <https://thinkprogress.org/brexit-was-sold-as-a-victory-for-the-working-class-it-isnt-8328445448c/>.

⁸⁵ "Majority in France against immigration," *The Local France*, 23 August, 2016, <https://www.thelocal.fr/20160823/immigration-negative-for-france-majority-says>.

FN's leader, Marine Le Pen, hailed Brexit as a "movement that can't be stopped" the day after the referendum results were announced.⁸⁶ Such statements were clearly alarming for pro-European French officials, including Macron and then-president Hollande, because Le Pen had also been issuing calls for a "Frexit" referendum since 2014.⁸⁷ Her 2017 presidential campaign promised a Brexit-style referendum within six months of her being in office. What made this prospect more worrying was that it reflected the 91% of Le Pen's supporters who were (when) in favor of holding a referendum on EU membership in France.⁸⁸ The fact that Le Pen reached the final round of voting for France's 2017 presidential elections meant that, until her defeat by current President Macron, the possibility of Frexit remained very real. Therefore, the Brexit referendum was viewed unfavorably by the French government because it feared that Eurosceptics in France would be emboldened to support their own Frexit. Ultimately, this could mean the end of France's identity as a pro-European nation and supporter of integration.

Security worries

In addition, the French government was anxious over the potentially detrimental effects of Brexit on European defense. The prospect of losing the UK as a contributor of European defense troubled the French government because it stood to lose its partner and co-leader in European defense. The UK has traditionally been a co-leader of European defense with France. These two countries possess nuclear capabilities and the largest militaries out of all EU member

⁸⁶ Angelique Chrisafis, "European far right hails Brexit vote," *The Guardian*, 24 June, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/24/european-far-right-hails-britains-brexit-vote-marine-le-pen>.

⁸⁷ Angelique Chrisafis, "European far right hails Brexit vote."

⁸⁸ Howard Cohen, "Will 'Frexit' supporters decide the outcome of the French presidential election?" *France24*, last modified 21 April, 2017, <https://www.france24.com/en/20170421-france-presidential-election-vote-compass-frexit>.

states. They are also the bloc's largest defense spenders. Ricketts even argues that France and the UK are the only EU member states to have demonstrated both the capability and desire to lead significant combat operations abroad for the sake of international security.⁸⁹ This demonstration occurred during their previous experience leading the UN Protection Force's (UNPROFOR) interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. The "convergence of thinking" between the French and British governments in this decade was what led to the signing of the Saint-Malo declaration in 1998.⁹⁰ This joint declaration was signed by then Prime Minister Tony Blair and President Jacques Chirac with the intention creating an autonomous military force for the EU.⁹¹ Both leaders believed the EU needed the capability to deploy military force in response to global crises without the help of NATO. This was especially important in case NATO refused to intervene in any particular crisis on behalf of the EU. Since 1998, France and the UK have continued to influence the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) and participated in more than 20 peacekeeping operations overseas. In 2003, the EU achieved the ability to deploy "60,000 personnel at 60 days' notice for at least one year."⁹² Brexit made French officials anxious because the success of the CSDP is partly due to this Franco-British leadership. The UK's departure may lead to France losing its partner in leading European defense and reduce its ability to further strengthen the CSDP.

⁸⁹ Peter Ricketts, "National Security Relations with France after Brexit," *Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies*, January 2018, 5.

⁹⁰ Peter Ricketts, "National Security Relations with France after Brexit," 5.

⁹¹ "Franco-British St. Malo Declaration (4 December 1998)," *Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe*, last modified June 22, 2015, https://www.cvce.eu/obj/franco_british_st_malo_declaration_4_december_1998-en-f3cd16fb-fc37-4d52-936f-c8e9bc80f24f.html.

⁹² Emyr Jones Parry, "The St Malo declaration 10 years on," *The Financial Times*, 1 December, 2008, <https://www.ft.com/content/7d97f048-bfc7-11dd-9222-0000779fd18c>.

The EU's overall security capabilities may also be weakened if Brexit leads to the complete exclusion of Britain from EU decision making processes. This would be a disastrous scenario for the French government because, although EU member states cooperate closely on defense and share military facilities and personnel, European defense remains relatively weak compared to other global powers like the U.S. or Russia. In September 2017, the British government published the "Future Partnership Paper" to clarify the type of future relationship the UK would like with the EU.⁹³ This document states that the UK wants a defense partnership with the EU that is "unprecedented in its breadth" and "deeper than any third country relationship." However, no actual terms to govern the UK's future role in EU defense have been set even today.⁹⁴ The issue of the UK's participation in EU defense was particularly problematic during the Brexit negotiations. This was the case because the UK's notification letter to the EU, in which it triggered Article 50 and the negotiation period, linked "the outcome of the trade talks to future security cooperation in Europe."⁹⁵ The UK's letter gave French and other EU officials the impression that the UK would leverage its EU security contributions to influence the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. Indeed, analysts and policy makers knew the UK could utilize its "security surplus" (i.e. its leadership of the EU's military and intelligence forces) as a bargaining chip to gain commercial concessions from the EU.⁹⁶ This knowledge made the French government worry the UK would refuse to continue participating in the EU's defense efforts if it

⁹³ "The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union," *Her Majesty's Government*, last modified July 2018, 54.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786626/The_Future_Relationship_between_the_United_Kingdom_and_the_European_Union_120319.pdf

⁹⁴ Christine Nissen, "The future of European security and defense cooperation after Brexit," *Danish Institute for International Studies*, (2017): 44. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17368.7>.

⁹⁵ Rem Korteweg, "Why Brexit is about security," *Atlantic Community*, 1 April, 2019, <https://atlantic-community.org/why-brexit-is-about-security/>.

⁹⁶ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the European Union?" 165.

was not granted favorable terms of exit. For example, the UK might reduce funding for its bilateral nuclear cooperation with France. These countries have funded a shared facility in France for testing the safety and viability of nuclear warhead designs since 2010.⁹⁷ Without continued British funding, France's nuclear development and capabilities may be severely hampered. Hence, French officials resisted Brexit because it released the UK from its mandate to contribute to the EU's defense projects and raised questions over its willingness to continue participating in these projects.

Brexit also threatened to diminish the EU's strategic coherence. On the one hand, Brexit forced EU leaders to pause initiatives geared toward further integration and re-focus their efforts into negotiating with the UK. After the Bratislava Summit of September 2016, then British Defense Minister Michael Fallon announced that the UK would veto any decision that strengthened the EU's defense until after its exit.⁹⁸ This announcement meant that EU leaders had to postpone all agreements regarding defense cooperation until February 2020. It has also led to slow progress in advancing EU defense efforts since 2016. And, on the other hand, the UK may choose to prioritize NATO over the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) to engage with international security matters after Brexit.⁹⁹ The French government views this negatively because, as explored earlier, having an autonomous European military has been one of its long-standing ambitions.¹⁰⁰ If the UK chooses to only engage in future international security matters through NATO, and not the EU, Brexit would weaken the military capabilities of the CSDP. Additionally, it could also worsen the CSDP's coherence by setting a precedent for abandoning the EU's multilateral approach to defense cooperation. The EU27 may find it harder

⁹⁷ Peter Ricketts, "National Security Relations with France after Brexit," 7.

⁹⁸ Christine Nissen, "The future of European security and defense cooperation after Brexit," 44.

⁹⁹ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the European Union?" 165.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Ricketts, "National Security Relations with France after Brexit," 5.

to unanimously agree to further integrate their defense industries, for example by deepening PESCO and the European Defense Fund (EDF), after Brexit. According to Korteweg, Europe has become a “geopolitical space for Chinese-American great power competition.” He theorizes that these two powers are challenging EU member states’ support for the CSDP by emphasizing bilateral, instead of multilateral, cooperation. This is evident through the Trump administration’s preference for bilateral agreements with EU member states, China’s One Belt, One Road initiative, and its 16+1 dialogue with Eastern European nations.¹⁰¹ In this context, Brexit could weaken the CSDP’s coherence by making member states question the EU’s multilateral approach to security and defense. So, the possibility of the British government choosing to channel its resources to NATO instead of European defense contributed to the French government’s fear of Brexit. The coherence of the CSDP would be threatened if the UK terminates its contributions to EU defense.

Nevertheless, it is important to remember that scholars and policy makers have argued, from even before the Brexit referendum, that continued participation in European defense remains in the UK’s interest.¹⁰² One reason for this is to maintain access to information, such as through intelligence databases that are held by the EU’s institutions.¹⁰³ Another reason is to retain access to the EU’s defense mechanisms, such as the Galileo Navigation Satellite System (GNSS). The GNSS was created to rival American navigation systems and offers a high

¹⁰¹ Rem Korteweg, “Why Brexit is about security.”

¹⁰² Rem Korteweg, “Why Brexit is about security.”

¹⁰³ Verlag Barbara Budrich, “Review: will Brexit damage our security and defense? The impact on the UK and EU by Simon Duke,” *European Review of International Studies* 6, no. 2 (2019): 181. https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/26860769.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_SYC-4946%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Ab91785b20ab2a901fc4c3cf1ca036f23.

precision that makes it integral for modern civilian and military operations.¹⁰⁴ It is in the UK's interest to maintain access to such institutions especially as it faces increasing security threats.¹⁰⁵ Additionally, as the UK has been a big financier and champion of the GNSS, it would be illogical for the UK to give up access to its systems.¹⁰⁶ The EU is aware of this and announced that it will only permit the UK to retain access to the Galileo project if it also continues participating in the EU's space program. Thus, the British and EU officials' understanding of the importance that Britain continues participating in European defense hints that the UK is likely to remain involved in this process after Brexit. However, what remains uncertain is in what capacity and to what extent the UK will be involved.

Economic worries

France also resisted Brexit because it brought about various types of economic worries in France on both a national and EU-level. The UK is one of France's largest export markets and vice versa. More French people, goods, and services move in and out of the UK than any other EU member state because of these nations' proximity and history. Hence, a disorderly Brexit meant that France could potentially face shortages, long delays at its borders, and/or sudden decreases in trade with the UK. These situations are particularly undesirable for French businesses because the bulk of France's exports to the UK are perishable agricultural goods. In 2015, more than 4.54 billion euros worth of food products were exported from France to the UK.

¹⁰⁴ Carly Read, "Javid says EU will crumble in trade talks – just like they did on Brexit deal," *Express*, 11 February, 2020, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1240612/brexit-news-boris-johnson-latest-brexit-live-EU-fishing-trade-talks>.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Ricketts, "National Security Relations with France after Brexit," 12.

¹⁰⁶ Rem Korteweg, "Why Brexit is about security."

This amount adds up to 14% of France's total food exports.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, France's National Association of Food Industries (ANIA) was one of the first to publish a statement clarifying which agricultural sectors in France stand to be most affected by Brexit and how to prepare for these changes.¹⁰⁸ These sectors include the wine and dairy industries. On top of these technical worries, French businesses also feared that the British pound would diminish in value after Brexit. This could decrease the amount of French goods demanded by British consumers and cause financial losses for many French businesses. These fears were especially real for those businesses that exported electronics, pharmaceuticals, and luxury products to the UK.¹⁰⁹ This is because such products are non-perishable and can be substituted by similar products made elsewhere, such as in China. Thus, French businesses worried that Brexit could disrupt their business dealings with the UK and potentially decrease the overall amount of trade with this country.

French businesses and the people that work for them also stood to lose from Brexit if it led to the end of free movement between France and the UK. In the run up to the 2016 referendum, the UK's Leave campaign focused heavily on reducing immigration and regaining control over its borders by ending free movement with the EU.¹¹⁰ In a mega-poll of 12,369 British voters, a study by Lord Ashcroft Polling found that a third of those who voted Leave in the 2016 referendum did so because it "offered the best chance for the UK to regain control over

¹⁰⁷ Sébastien Seibt, "How Brexit will affect French industry," *France24*, last modified 28 June, 2016, <https://www.france24.com/en/20160628-how-will-brexit-affect-french-industry>.

¹⁰⁸ Stéphane Dahmani, "[Brexit] quell impact pour le secteur agroliminaire?" *Association Nationale des Industries Alimentaires*, 24 June, 2016, <https://www.ania.net/economie-export/brexit>.

¹⁰⁹ Vivien Pertusot, "France," in *Europe's Brexit: EU perspectives on Britain's vote to leave*, ed. Tim Oliver (London: Agenda Publishing, 2018), 59.

¹¹⁰ Alan Travis, "The leave campaign made three key promises – are they keeping them?" *The Guardian*, 27 June, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/27/eu-referendum-reality-check-leave-campaign-promises>.

immigration and its own borders.”¹¹¹ Although the Leave campaign also promised on its website that “there will be no change for EU citizens already lawfully resident in the UK,” analysts like France’s deputy for overseas residents, Christophe Premat, believes these promises are unfounded.¹¹² Like many Leavers in the UK, Premat believes that this status quo is unlikely to continue because immigration was such a central topic to the Leave campaign. In France, the possibility of the UK closing its borders raised many questions about citizenship status and the future rights of French citizens to work and live in the UK.¹¹³ Many French citizens in Britain feared the end of free movement would create uncertainties about and complicate their ability to remain in the UK. They worried that this could lead to forced relocations and family separations. The issue of citizens being forcefully repatriated from the UK concerns France because this country is the one that receives the largest sum of remittances from the UK. In 2017 alone, French citizens remitted over \$1.8 billion from the UK.¹¹⁴ Hence, French citizens in Britain resisted Brexit because it complicated their future ability to work and reside in the UK.

The end of free movement between France and the UK could potentially create economic and security problems at France’s border. The port of Calais is France’s main trading port with the UK and also one of the main routes taking by illegal migrants to enter the UK. In 2003, France and the UK signed the Touquet Accords which allows for each country to conduct border

¹¹¹ Asa Bennett, “Did Britain really vote Brexit to cut immigration?” *The Telegraph*, 29 June, 2016, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/29/did-britain-really-vote-brex-it-to-cut-immigration/>.

¹¹² Lisa O’Carroll, “Would Europeans be free to stay in the UK after Brexit?” *The Guardian*, 22 June, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jun/22/will-europeans-be-free-to-stay-in-the-uk-after-brex-it>.

¹¹³ Rémi Carlier, “Brexit uncertainty among French diaspora in London’s ‘frog valley,’” *France24*, last modified 31 January, 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/20200131-in-london-s-frog-valley-french-diaspora-brace-for-brex-it>.

¹¹⁴ Allison McCann, Milan Schreuer and Amis Tsang, “Where Europe would be hurt most by a no-deal Brexit,” *The New York Times*, 7 February, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/07/world/europe/brex-it-impact-on-european-union.html>.

controls in the other's territory. This agreement has led to large numbers of migrants being refused entry to the UK at the Calais border and requiring the assistance of the French government to resettle in France. The French government already expressed the need to revise the Touquet Accords because of the unfair burden France must bear over the relocation of these migrants since before the Brexit referendum. However, as Brexit means the UK may close its borders with the EU, it has also accelerated the need for this revision. In March 2016 then Minister of Economic Affairs, Emmanuel Macron, emphasized this notion by stating that Brexit could cause migrants to "no longer be in Calais."¹¹⁵ In saying this, Macron implies the end of British border patrol in Calais could lead to an unprecedented influx of illegal migration into the UK via France. This is because the UK will lose the ability to screen those entering the UK in Calais. Such a situation, in which the overall number of undocumented migrants in both countries is increased, is desired by neither the UK nor France. Both countries would ultimately need to allocate more resources to cope with increased undocumented migration. Therefore, Brexit was also resisted in France because it risked compromising the security measures already in place on the Calais border.

Finally, French politicians feared that Britain's departure could weaken the EU's leverage to pursue its trade preferences on the international stage. The reason for this is that the EU's power and effectiveness are partly based on its counterparts' perceptions of the EU.¹¹⁶ Using the concept of BATNA (Best Alternative to Negotiated Agreement), Zimmermann claims that the

¹¹⁵ Jon Henley, "The Calais border treaty and Brexit: what is France saying?" *The Guardian*, 3 March, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/03/calais-border-treaty-brexit-what-is-france-saying>.

¹¹⁶ Hubert Zimmermann, "Brexit and the external trade policy of the EU," *European Review of International Studies*, 6, no. 1 (2019), 29. https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/26781230.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_SYC-4946%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Acbf1edd10503366f1eab51161f2cf320

EU's ability to achieve favorable trade deals with third party countries can be compromised by Brexit. As the UK will separate itself from the bloc's foreign and trade policies, the EU will lose some of its power to demand concessions from third party countries. Zimmerman predicts that Brexit may increase the BATNA of countries that trade with the EU by decreasing their dependence on the bloc and giving these countries an alternative negotiating partner. Having the UK as an alternative negotiating partner to the EU means that third party countries may not have to agree with the EU's often stringent regulations.¹¹⁷ For example, third party countries may choose to partner with the UK instead of the EU when it comes to trading some agricultural products because they may not have to adhere to the EU's extensive laws for food and environmental safety. This means the EU may lose out on future trade deals with non-EU nations because the UK now stands as a more appealing alternative negotiator. The possibility that Brexit might reduce the EU's ability to make demands of and achieve concessions from its trading partners added onto the list of fears held by the French government. Thus, there was much resistance to Brexit in France because it threatened the French economy in various ways.

As seen, there were numerous factors behind the French government's resistance to the 2016 Brexit referendum. It is important to remember that the results of this referendum took them by surprise. Additionally, the government anticipated the difficulties of the Brexit negotiations because of the EU's tradition of being a stubborn negotiator. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that Brexit is the first time Article 50 has been invoked. French officials knew that there were no precedents for managing an EU member state's exit that the EU27 could easily follow. The pro-European French government also opposed the 2016 Brexit referendum

¹¹⁷ Hubert Zimmermann, "Brexit and the external trade policy of the EU," 30.

because it threatened to embolden Eurosceptic sentiments at home. In France, the far-right Front National has been gaining political momentum under Marine Le Pen. The success of this party could lead to 'Frexit' and the end of the EU as we know it. Additionally, fears related to France's national security and economy also contributed to its government's resistance to Brexit. France and the UK have successfully shared leadership of European defense over decades. The prospect that this status quo might change after the UK's departure from the EU worried the French government. And as for France's economy, much stands to be lost if the UK's departure is not carefully managed. This is because France is one of the UK's main trading partners and closest neighbors. As explored, the exhaustive number of potential problems France could face because of the UK's departure from the EU explains why the 2016 Brexit referendum was resisted by the French government.

Chapter 3: France in the Brexit negotiations

Why France maintained a tough stance in the Brexit negotiations

French leaders maintained a united and hardline stance in the Brexit negotiations of June 2017–January 2020 because of worries related to their own economies, citizens, and agendas.¹¹⁸ President Macron’s tough stance can be explained by his belief that Brexit has taken up too much of the EU’s agenda. According to Christian Lequesne, professor at Paris’ Sciences Po, Brexit has become an impediment to Macron’s “political project” to renew the EU.¹¹⁹ Since the Brexit referendum in 2016, Macron has been developing a vision for the EU’s future in which Brexit is taken as “an opportunity for France to relaunch the EU” alongside Germany.¹²⁰ However, these ambitious plans, which involve setting a clear course for European defense and recovering spirit for the continent’s integration project, could be hindered because of delays caused by the Brexit negotiations. As Macron’s time as president is limited, his time to deliver the changes he promised during his presidential campaign are running out as Brexit hogs the EU’s agenda.¹²¹ Macron also looked unfavorably at the prospect of Britain halting its contributions to highly integrated EU policies, such as the fisheries and common agricultural policies, worker retraining programs, and development assistance for poor regions. This position was shared by Michel Barnier, French politician and the EU’s chief Brexit negotiator. Barnier was also “unexpectedly rigid and hostile to the UK” from the onset of these negotiations and rejected all British

¹¹⁸ Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, “Are Germany and France trying to get the UK to rescind Brexit?” *Rhodium Group* (New York), 15 June, 2017, <https://rhg.com/research/germany-france-trying-get-uk-rescind-brexit/>.

¹¹⁹ Angelique Chrisafis, “Macron’s tough-guy stance on Brexit is part of his political project,” *The Guardian*, 11 April, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/11/macrons-tough-guy-stance-on-brexit-is-part-of-his-political-project>.

¹²⁰ Christian Lequesne, “Brexit – a French perspective,” *UK in a Changing Europe*, 10 November, 2017, <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/brexit-a-french-perspective/#>.

¹²¹ Angelique Chrisafis, “Macron’s tough-guy stance on Brexit is part of his political project.”

aspirations for an easy exit from the EU. He insisted the UK could not be allowed to cherry pick what EU institutions it wished to remain a part of. For example, the EU demanded the allowance of its vessels in British fishing waters if the UK's financial services were to maintain access to the European single market.¹²² Additionally, in a joint statement released less than a week after the 2016 referendum, EU27 heads of state also specified that continued British access to the single market requires the UK to continue complying with all four EU freedoms - free movement of goods, services, people and capital.¹²³ These demands confirm the French government's hardline stance in the Brexit negotiations is because it wanted to protect its own interests.

Barnier and Macron were also tough in the Brexit negotiations because they wanted to prevent the UK from ending its contributions to the EU's highly integrated policies, such as its common agricultural and fisheries policy. The British government wanted to end the UK's participation in these policies because this country has been a net contributor, as opposed to net beneficiary, of the EU's programs. The British government also wanted to restrict free movement with the EU as this objective was promised by the Leave campaign. The ambitions of the British government worried the French government because there are more French people in London than Bordeaux, Strasbourg or Nantes. In fact, London is the world's sixth biggest Francophone city.¹²⁴ Ending free movement between France and the UK could, at the very least,

¹²² Bill McLoughlin, "Macron takes parting shot at UK saying Brexit based on 'lies' as battle lines drawn," *Express* (London), 31 January, 2020, <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1236339/emmanuel-macron-brexit-day-eu-leave-date-brexit-celebration-eu-referendum>.

¹²³ William James and Paul Taylor, "EU tells UK single market access requires full free movement," *Thomson Reuters*, 29 June, 2016, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-wrapup/eu-tells-uk-single-market-access-requires-full-free-movement-idUSKCN0ZF29S>.

¹²⁴ Michael Leigh, "Brexit requires five difficult negotiations," *German Marshall Fund of the United States* (2016): 2, https://www-jstor-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/stable/pdf/resrep18771.pdf?ab_segments=0%252Fbasic_SYC-5055%252Fcontrol&refreqid=excelsior%3Ae7312f684e10f5f7beb66d4a2b23329b.

cause tremendous legal and logistical issues for many French citizens. Allowing the UK to determine the extent of its participation in EU policies allows it to benefit disproportionately from the EU and effectively become one of its net beneficiaries. This may increase the amount of contributions required from the bloc's remaining contributors, namely France and Germany. The UK could also undercut France and the EU on standards including environmental, workers' and social rights if it decides to set its own regulations.¹²⁵ In February 2020, Barnier published the EU's initial draft negotiating position. This document asks the UK to uphold the EU's standards on these issues as they are discussed in the Brexit negotiations. This statement was made after concerns that the EU's efforts to toughen its regulations, particularly in regard to the environment, could be hampered if the British businesses are allowed to adhere to lower standards and undercut European businesses.¹²⁶ As discussed, France and the remaining EU27 did not concede to the UK's demands in the Brexit negotiations because British contributions to EU projects remain in their interest.

The uncompromising attitude that French leaders displayed in the Brexit negotiations was also a product of careful planning. Even before the 2016 Brexit referendum, then president of the European Council Donald Tusk already met with EU27 leaders to encourage them to stand united in the face of Brexit. Tusk's actions meant the EU was ready to release a joint statement, in which they asserted their unity and preparedness to handle the UK's departure, less than five hours after the referendum results were announced.¹²⁷ They also reflect the fact that French and EU leaders did not want Brexit to set a precedent for leaving the bloc with ease. This agenda is

¹²⁵ Daniel Boffey, "Brexit: Macron pushes for tougher EU negotiating position," *The Guardian*, 13 February, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/feb/13/brexit-macron-tougher-eu-negotiating-position>.

¹²⁶ Daniel Boffey, "Brexit: Macron pushes for tougher EU negotiating position."

¹²⁷ Zach Meyer, "How the UK lost the Brexit battle," *Politico*, 2 April, 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/how-uk-lost-brexit-eu-negotiation/>.

evident through the EU's refusal to discuss the terms of Brexit until the British government formally invokes Article 50 and starts the designated two-year negotiation period. Until Article 50's invocation, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker forbade EU national governments and commission staff from secretly discussing the UK's terms of exit or future relationship with British officials.¹²⁸ Juncker wanted to avoid negotiating Brexit ahead of the two-year period because of his awareness that, once this period commenced, the EU could use this countdown as leverage over the UK, which will become increasingly desperate to secure an exit deal.¹²⁹ The EU was able to uphold its tough stance because it had the upper hand in negotiations with the UK. Because the negotiations were controlled by the EU, the UK could not start negotiations before formally notifying the EU of its intentions to leave the bloc nor agree on a future relationship until a divorce agreement, which encompasses issues such as citizens' rights and the Irish border, was settled first.¹³⁰ This confirms how France and the EU influenced the Brexit negotiations in their favor by standing firm and united against the UK.

The French government also perceived a tough stance in the Brexit negotiations as necessary to ensure the preservation and unity of the EU. The results of the Brexit referendum did not only indicate British citizens' fears over migration and economic downturn, but also that the EU needed to reform if it wishes to maintain its members' support.¹³¹ Since the Brexit negotiations would create a legal precedent for leaving the bloc, French officials did not want to support any

¹²⁸ Manon Dufour, Quentin Genard and Philipp Thaler, "Brexit and the EU leaders keep calm and carry on with Europe," *E3* (2016): 1. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17766>.

¹²⁹ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the EU?" in *The Political Economy of Brexit*, ed. David Bailey and Leslie Budd (Agenda Publishing: London, 2017), 163

¹³⁰ Zach Meyer, "How the UK lost the Brexit battle."

¹³¹ Manon Dufour, Quentin Genard and Philipp Thaler, "Brexit and the EU leaders keep calm and carry on with Europe," 3.

deals with the UK that could lead to further disintegration of the EU in the future.¹³² Indeed, a domino effect caused by the UK and/ or EU member states that are tied together more loosely than before could be among the most profound effects of Brexit.¹³³ Mattelaer asserts that, like most other EU leaders, President Macron understood “the integrity of the European project is key.” Despite also having other “domestic political imperatives” that needed to be pursued during the Brexit negotiations, Macron prioritized acting in coherence with the EU27.¹³⁴ The EU’s unwillingness to pre-negotiate exit terms before the UK activated Article 50 was also because it knew Britain would attempt individual negotiations with each remaining EU member state. According to Oliver, EU leaders did not agree to remain united because they overestimated Britain’s ability to divide its members through individual negotiations. Instead, they knew from past experiences negotiating with third party countries, like the USA, Turkey or Russia, that these types of negotiations can exacerbate the EU’s internal divisions and make agreements almost impossible.¹³⁵ Therefore, the EU27 altogether maintained a hardline negotiating position with the UK to preserve the EU’s unity by not allowing member states to have split opinions on Brexit. Their approach was intended to disallow Brexit from setting a precedent for easily leaving the EU despite the growth of nationalist and populist forces in France and across Europe.¹³⁶

Furthermore, the French government’s unwavering approach to the Brexit negotiations was motivated by its desire to reverse the UK’s decision. Macron’s government knew that Brexit

¹³²Alexander Mattelaer, “Towards a Belgian position on Brexit,” *Egmont Institute* (2017): 5, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17407.4>.

¹³³ Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the EU?” 159.

¹³⁴ Alexander Mattelaer, “Towards a Belgian position on Brexit,” 4–5.

¹³⁵ Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the EU?” 163.

¹³⁶ Shahroo Malik, “Post-Brexit scenario” *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 4 (2018): 90, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48544279>.

would consume the EU's time and resources. It could force the EU to divert time and attention from other urgent issues such as terrorism, migration, and climate change. This is a dangerous possibility because, as argued by Leigh, progress and developments in these areas are essential for the preservation of the EU's unity in a world of growing uncertainty.¹³⁷ As it takes away from the EU's ability to pursue other matters, the Brexit negotiations could become costly for France.¹³⁸ Also, from experiences negotiating treaties with third-party countries, such as Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, the French government knew that the two year negotiation period granted by Article 50 would be insufficient.¹³⁹ The TTIP between the EU and Canada has not been signed despite having been discussed since 2013. And the CETA between these two same parties took seven years to finalize. The knowledge of how complex and lengthy the Brexit negotiations could be explains why Macron wanted to reverse Brexit and keep the UK in the EU. This is evident through his joint press conference with Theresa May at the Elysée Palace in June 2017, just after the UK's activation of Article 50. In this press conference, Macron stated the "door to the EU remains open" to Britain even as they entered the negotiations to formalize its exit.¹⁴⁰ Even as the negotiations progressed, Macron continued to push for a second referendum to be held in the UK. In April 2019, when the UK was seeking an extension to the negotiation period, Macron stated that he would only grant this delay if the UK uses its extra time to "hold a general election

¹³⁷ Michael Leigh, "Brexit requires five difficult negotiations," 4.

¹³⁸ Michael Leigh, "Brexit requires five difficult negotiations," 1.

¹³⁹ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the EU?" 163.

¹⁴⁰ Jessica Elgot and Anushka Asthana, "Emmanuel Macron says door to remain in EU is open to Britain," *The Guardian*, 13 June, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jun/13/brexit-talks-to-start-next-week>.

or a second referendum.”¹⁴¹ Although he ultimately fell in line with the remaining EU27 and granted Brexit an extension, Macron’s initial stance demonstrates his personal ambition to reverse the results of the 2016 referendum. Thus, the actions of Macron’s government reveal its aspiration to keep the UK in the EU. It acted tough in the Brexit negotiations because it understood how time and resource consuming these discussions could be for the EU.

The validity of France’s Brexit worries

As explored, the French government had numerous reasons to worry about the UK’s departure and, as a result, stood united with the EU in a hardline stance during the Brexit negotiations. However, despite the ample reasons for its worries, it remains important to examine the other side of the argument. Over three and a half years have passed since the 2016 referendum and the UK formally left the EU on 31 January 2020. Surprisingly, not many of the French government’s initial Brexit fears have materialized. The British government continues to participate in many EU initiatives, such as in defense and intelligence, and permits French citizens to continue residing in the UK. That said, the EU27 have endured Brexit with more ease than the French government predicted prior to the 2016 Brexit referendum. This raises the question of whether the initial Brexit-related worries held by the French government were valid or overstated. To do this, we will examine why the French government’s initial Brexit-related concerns may have been exaggerated.

First, France and the EU have faced and are facing other crises that present them with similar challenges to Brexit. Korteweg asserts that the EU is currently “surrounded by the four horsemen

¹⁴¹ Jon Stone, “Macron says he is open to long Brexit delay for referendum, general election or softer deal,” *Independent* (London), 2 April, 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-delay-macron-second-referendum-election-theresa-may-a8851066.html>.

of the apocalypse.”¹⁴² Eastern Europe and Ukraine are ravaged by war, refugees and migrants are drowned in the Mediterranean, economic hardship is attacking struggling Eurozone participants like Greece, and Euroscepticism is plaguing the continent. This spreading Euroscepticism has taken the UK as its first victim. Korteweg concedes that this view of the EU is extreme. However, it emphasizes how Brexit cannot be viewed as an epidemic but rather as one of multiple obstacles facing France and the EU. Indeed, French and other EU governments are already approaching current discussions with the UK with this knowledge in mind. A policy paper signed and released by the French and German Foreign Affairs Ministers called for a “strong Europe in a world of uncertainties” and highlighted the need for the EU to proceed on key areas such as security, border control, digital agendas, Eurozone governance and foreign policy, even if countries outside the EU are trending toward nationalism and securing their interests first.¹⁴³ The steadfast attitude of EU leaders in the face of Brexit as well as other challenges that threaten the continent is a reminder of the EU’s resilience and ability to overcome such crises. Were the French government convinced by this sooner, perhaps worries over Brexit spoiling the EU would not have been as widespread.

Second, the cultural and economic ties shared by France and the UK have are so well-established that it is in both of these nations’ interests to maintain them. Joint military intervention in the Suez Crisis in 1956 and the First and Second World Wars are only some examples that attest to the UK and France’s ability to form extremely close and cooperative

¹⁴² Rem Korteweg, “Why Brexit is about security,” *Atlantic Community*, 1 April, 2019, <https://atlantic-community.org/why-brexit-is-about-security/>.

¹⁴³ Manon Dufour, Quentin Genard and Philipp Thaler, “Brexit and the EU leaders keep calm and carry on with Europe,” 3.

partnerships in difficult times.¹⁴⁴ The decades long friendship that characterizes the UK and France's bilateral relationship suggests that trade is likely to continue between the two countries even if the UK leaves the EU customs union. In fact, during her time as Prime Minister, Theresa May explained in a speech at Lancaster House in January 2017 that the UK's objective in negotiating its future relationship with the EU is to achieve an ambitious free trade agreement. This indicates that although the UK does not want to remain in the EU's customs union, it still wants to trade freely with the bloc.¹⁴⁵ The close ties between France and the UK extend further than state-level matters and also apply to the people of these countries. As French and British people have a shared history and intermingled with one another for centuries, their cultures have become closely integrated. Indeed, a study found that small French villages and cities are very accustomed to having British citizens as members of their community. This cultural similarity is emphasized by the fact that some French regions, such as Charente, Dordogne and the Lot, have seen sudden rises in the number of British people applying for French citizenship since the 2016 Brexit referendum. In France more generally, the number of British citizens who applied for French citizenship increased by 254% from 385 applicants in early 2015 to 1363 in 2017.¹⁴⁶ The same study found many cases of French citizens assisting their British neighbors in their mission to secure French citizenships. Hence, Brexit may not negatively impact bilateral relations between France and the UK as much as it was believed to because these countries already shared a close relationship prior to the UK's departure.

¹⁴⁴ Karine Varley, "Brexit: France and UK have long and troubled history – but pragmatism offers a bright future," *The Conversation*, 17 September, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/brexit-france-and-uk-have-long-and-troubled-history-but-pragmatism-offers-a-bright-future-123495>.

¹⁴⁵ Alexander Mattelaer, "Towards a Belgian position on Brexit," 5.

¹⁴⁶ Christian Lequesne, "Brexit – a French perspective."

Third, it has always been unlikely that the UK would stop participating in all the EU's policies. The reason for this is that it was and remains in the UK's national security interest to participate in European defense. The British government's knowledge of this fact is underlined in its 2018 British National Security Review, in which it asserts that "Europe's security is our security." This is the case because the UK's departure from the EU does not change the geography of Europe. The UK will continue to share the EU's "strategic environment" and, because of this, also similar security threats.¹⁴⁷ Michel Barnier has reciprocated the UK's ambition to maintain their close relationship in an April 2019 speech that affirmed the need for continued close cooperation between the two parties. Barnier emphasized this relationship as being a mutual interest for both parties, especially as the threats that affect their countries are becoming increasingly unpredictable.¹⁴⁸ Latici even argues that finding lasting solutions to Europe's security challenges would be extremely difficult if cooperation between the EU and UK on these matters were to be reduced.¹⁴⁹ Clearly, the problems affecting the entirety of the European continent, such as cyber security attacks, terrorism, state fragility in the Middle East and Africa, and Russia's disruptive behavior, can be better tackled if the EU works together to come up with collaborative solutions. Collaboration is especially important as the current foreign policy of the U.S., with its heavy focus on "America first," insinuates that "Europe will have to rely more on its own forces to defend itself."¹⁵⁰ Thus, because it remains in the UK's interest to

¹⁴⁷ Tania Latici, "What role in European defense for a post-Brexit United Kingdom?" *European Parliamentary Research Service* (April 2019): 1.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637941/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)637941_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637941/EPRS_BRI(2019)637941_EN.pdf).

¹⁴⁸ Tania Latici, "What role in European defense for a post-Brexit United Kingdom?" 4.

¹⁴⁹ Tania Latici, "What role in European defense for a post-Brexit United Kingdom?" 2.

¹⁵⁰ George Robertson and Bernard Cazeneuve, "The UK-France alliance is crucial to Europe's security. Brexit must not threaten it," *The Guardian*, 8 November, 2018,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/08/uk-france-europe-security-brexit>.

continue participating in certain EU initiatives, the French government did not need to worry about the UK ending its EU contributions as much as it did.

Finally, the French government may not have needed to worry that Brexit could cause a rise of Euroscepticism in France because of the failures of the British Leave campaign. Malik argues that the British Leave campaign “lacked deep political thinking.” Its success in the 2016 referendum was mostly due to promises to end immigration and re-allocate the UK’s EU contribution to the UK’s own National Health Services (NHS).¹⁵¹ However, these promises are unrealistic and have been impossible to deliver. This failure of British Leavers could fail to impress and inspire Eurosceptics in other EU member states, including France. Instead, the chaos of negotiating Brexit could cause the EU to become more united. In a sense, even a disorderly or “hard” Brexit can be beneficial for the EU. Such a scenario will force “all [countries] involved to realize what they have to lose.”¹⁵² In this case, the final outcome for the EU may be a “harsh-positive” Brexit in which the UK and EU are forced to compromise on a viable solution to move forward.¹⁵³ There is already evidence that, instead of strengthening Eurosceptic sentiments in France and the EU, Brexit has actually boosted support for Europe. For instance, Brussels has successfully motivated the remaining EU27 to proceed with deeper military cooperation through the European Defense Action Plan and Permanent Structured Cooperation on Security and Defense (PESCO).¹⁵⁴ The fact that these initiatives were accepted by the EU27 indicates the support for the EU remains strong despite Brexit. Therefore, the failures of the Brexit Leave campaign should have reduced the French government’s fear that the UK’s departure would increase Eurosceptic sentiments in France.

¹⁵¹ Shahroo Malik, “Post-Brexit scenario,” 93.

¹⁵² Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the EU,” 169.

¹⁵³ Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the EU,” 169.

¹⁵⁴ Shahroo Malik, “Post-Brexit scenario,” 104.

The French government had various reasons to worry over Brexit and, because of this, took a hardline stance in the Brexit negotiations. As explored, Macron's government acted tough and in line with the EU because it perceived the UK's departure as a threat to France and the EU. The process of negotiating the UK's exit takes up the EU's valuable time, which it could be using to discuss other important security matters. Discussions over Brexit were also stealing the spotlight away from Macron's attempts at reforming the EU and progressing with integration. Additionally, like other EU leaders, Macron perceived maintaining a unified position with the remaining EU27 as imperative for the EU's survival. By ensuring that the UK was not granted an easy exit, the French government could effectively dissuade Eurosceptics in France from wanting to follow in the UK's footsteps. Furthermore, the UK could even reverse its decision to leave the bloc if it becomes too difficult to strike a favorable deal with the EU. However, the validity of the French government's Brexit-related worries should be questioned. More than three years have passed since British citizens voted to leave the EU and not many of these initial worries have manifested. In retrospect, there were numerous pieces of evidence that should have reduced the French government's Brexit-related anxieties. Perhaps it should not have feared a Brexit domino-effect because the EU's resilience has been tested by crises before. And in terms of the Franco-British bilateral relationship, the close pre-existing relationship between these countries has made it in the interest of both parties to maintain their ties. This is similar to the case of participating in EU defense, which also remains in the UK's interest even after it leaves the EU's political and economic union. Thus, even before the 2016 Brexit referendum occurred, there was reason for the French government to believe that the UK's exit would not dramatically alter its relationship with the EU. The next four chapters will take a closer look at how the UK's

departure impacts the Franco-British relationship to better understand if the French government's initial Brexit-related worries were indeed overstated.

Chapter 4: The impact of Brexit on French attitudes toward the EU

This section explores the impact of Brexit on French attitudes toward the EU. The first part traces the beginning of French Euroscepticism in the 1950s and its growing popularity, demonstrated through the political success of the Front National (FN), prior to the 2016 Brexit referendum. It argues that Brexit was not desirable in France because of its potential ability to boost Eurosceptic sentiments and support for anti-EU parties at home. The second part examines French attitudes toward the EU in the period between the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2017 French Presidential elections. During this time the rise of Euroscepticism in France was temporarily halted and is evident by the victory of pro-EU Emmanuel Macron over the anti-EU Marine Le Pen. This pause was due to the framing and understanding of Brexit as self-harming and simply one of many crises that have affected the EU in recent years. The third part looks at the period between the 2017 French presidential elections and the 2019 European Parliament elections to underline how, although questioned in the immediate aftermath of Brexit, anti-EU sentiments persist in France. However, the understanding of what being anti-EU means has changed because of Brexit. Instead of implying a British style departure from the bloc, France's Eurosceptics are now calling for reforms of France's position within the union. Overall, Brexit momentarily quelled rising support for the Eurosceptic FN. More importantly, it provided a cautionary tale of leaving the EU and undid the FN's previous desire for a 'Frexit.'

Prior to June 2016 referendum:

The prospect of Brexit was not well-received in France for numerous reasons. First, there was fear that British exit from the EU would set a precedent which other countries would soon follow. Second, many anticipated that Brexit could allow Marine Le Pen, who advocated for

‘Frexit’ (i.e. French exit), to gain momentum in the upcoming Presidential elections. This notion was especially widespread because the Brexit referendum on June 23, 2016 took place less than a year before the 2017 Presidential elections in France. And third, Brexit puts the Anglo-French bilateral relationship in jeopardy because much cooperation between the two countries occurs in the context of the EU.¹⁵⁵

Brexit creates a precedent for leaving the EU because it is the first time a country with the UK’s population size and influence over EU decision making has left the union.¹⁵⁶ Its potentially swift and beneficial departure would have given confidence to all other anti-EU nations to follow suit. The UK leaving the EU poses a challenge to the idea of an ‘ever closer union,’ which means the continual progression toward a federal or supranational Europe.¹⁵⁷ Along with the recent economic rise of China and the election of Trump, Brexit could have been perceived globally as another example of the growing rejection of a “liberal internationalist agenda” of pro-globalization and shared sovereignty.¹⁵⁸ A widespread rejection of this agenda was undesirable because it would reinforce the Eurosceptic sentiments that were growing within France and its neighbors. In winter 2015-2016, opinion polls indicated rising support for Eurosceptic parties in France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Netherlands and the UK. At this time the main governing parties in Greece, Hungary and Poland were anti-EU.¹⁵⁹ Surveys before the

¹⁵⁵ Vivien Pertusot, “France” in *Europe’s Brexit: EU perspectives on Britain’s vote to leave*, edited by Tim Oliver (United Kingdom: Agenda Publishing, 2018), 58.

¹⁵⁶ Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, “The implications of Brexit for the future of Europe” in *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the futures of Europe*, edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger (London: UCL Press, 2018), 63.

¹⁵⁷ Tim Oliver, “The EU and Brexit: processes, perspectives, and prospects,” in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, edited by William Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 132.

¹⁵⁸ Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the European Union?” in *The Political Economy of Brexit*, edited by David Bailey and Leslie Budd (Newcastle: Agenda Publishing, 2017), 159.

¹⁵⁹ Neill Nugent, “Brexit: yet another crisis for the EU,” in *Brexit and beyond: rethinking the futures of Europe*, edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger (London: UCL Press, 2018), 58.

June 2016 UK referendum also show the EU facing a decline in support among all its members.¹⁶⁰ Hence, due to the rising popularity of Euroscepticism and its potential ability to disrupt the EU and relations among its members, France did not want Brexit to create a precedent for leaving this union.

France also disliked the UK's plans of a referendum on EU membership because it could boost Eurosceptic sentiments at home. Although the French government has largely been supportive of Europe since its inception, the nation of France has also witnessed bouts of Euroscepticism. For example, in 1954 the National Assembly rejected the creation of a European Defence Community. And in 1965, President De Gaulle initiated the 'empty chair crisis,' that is France's refusal to attend European Council meetings because of revisions over the Common Agricultural Policy that it viewed as violations of national sovereignty. Another demonstration of French Euroscepticism is evident in the 1992 referendum over the Maastricht Treaty when only 51% of French citizens approved this European treaty.¹⁶¹ France's Eurosceptic sentiments manifest themselves as support for extreme right-wing and anti-EU parties, such as the Front National (FN). The FN is France's most successful right-wing populist party that promotes values of sovereignty, nativism, and nationalism. The party portrays itself as a defender of French national interests to justify its contestation of EU membership.¹⁶²

Up until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty referendum in France the FN, that was then led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, did not care much for EU-level affairs. The party's ambivalence toward Europe is demonstrated by its support for a common European currency and defence policy. It

¹⁶⁰ Tim Oliver, "The EU and Brexit: processes, perspectives, and prospects," 132.

¹⁶¹ Olivier Rozenberg, "Monnet for nothing? France's mixed Europeanisation," *Les Cahiers européens de Sciences Po*, no. 4 (December 2011): 3.

¹⁶² Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis: The Front National and politics of Euroscepticism in France," *Political Studies Association*, vol. 38 no. 3 (2018): 280.

was only after the marginal approval of the Maastricht Treaty by 51% of the French population that the FN realized they could capitalize on growing anti-EU sentiments. This was when the party began calls to restore French sovereignty from the hands of European policymakers by reducing mandatory cooperation among EU member states and forming smaller voluntary coalitions.¹⁶³ With the influx of asylum seekers from the Middle East and Islamic terrorism affecting France deeply in the past decade, the FN's strategy of capitalizing on anti-EU sentiments has allowed it to make significant electoral gains by operating between the nation's "persistent fracture" between pro- and anti- EU voters.¹⁶⁴ Marine Le Pen won 17.9% of votes in the 2012 Presidential Elections and 21.3% and 33.9% in the two rounds of the 2017 Presidential Elections. The rise of a leader whose campaign promised a French referendum within 6 months of her presidency made the French public fear Brexit because, as a founding member of the EU, France traditionally supports globalization and further Europeanization. The election of Le Pen would change this stance as well as undermine France's identity as a pro-European nation.

Additionally, French government officials also opposed a British referendum because it would jeopardize the Franco-British relationship that largely occurs within the context on the EU. The UK and France are both members of the European Single Market and Brexit implies the end of free movement of people, goods, and services between France and the UK. This poses huge practical problems for France because of the uncertainties associated with the future of its citizens. In 2016, an estimated 250,000 French citizens were residing in the UK and in January

¹⁶³ Paul Hainsworth, Carolyn O'Brien and Paul Mitchell, "Defending the nation: the politics of Euroscepticism on the French right" in *Euroscepticism: party politics, national identity and European integration*, edited by Robert Harmsen and Menno Speiring (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004), 38.

¹⁶⁴ Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis, 281.

2017, 157,000 British citizens were living in France.¹⁶⁵ The number of people and businesses that would be placed in legal limbo until the UK finalized its exit deal with the EU made the prospect of Brexit unfavorable among the French. Furthermore, much of the state-level cooperation between France and the UK would also be put to question were the UK to leave the EU. A prime example of this cooperation is the Franco-British defence relationship which began in 1998 with the St. Malo Accord and led to the 1999 creation of a common EU defence policy.¹⁶⁶ After the signing of the Lancaster House Treaties in 2010, the Franco-British defence cooperation became the most ambitious bilateral military relationship of any EU members.¹⁶⁷ With the UK's potential departure from the bloc France will be the only major military power with nuclear capabilities and a permanent seat in the UN Security Council left in the EU. Without the UK's guaranteed and continued future involvement, France would be left to lead European defence alone. This would be unpopular among a large percentage of the French public who already see the country as having to "do Europe's dirty work" at the expense of their own sovereignty.¹⁶⁸

Thus, France had numerous reasons to fear the prospects of a British referendum. It did not want Brexit to set a precedent for leaving the EU nor anti-EU sentiments to be boosted at home. This was imperative because of the growing popularity of the Eurosceptic Front National whose leader, Marine Le Pen, was then a leading candidate for France's presidency. Also, France

¹⁶⁵ Chico Harlan, "Frexit? Italeave? After watching Brexit, the other European countries say: no, thanks," *The Washington Post* 29 March, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/frexit-italleave-after-watching-brexite-other-european-countries-say-no-thanks/2019/03/29/7b6e059a-4be0-11e9-8cfc-2c5d0999c21e_story.html.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation," *Carnegie Europe* (18 January 2018), <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/75298>.

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation."

¹⁶⁸ Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation."

did not want its relationship with the UK to be ruptured because of the future uncertainties associated with British exit from the EU.

Post-2016 Referendum–French Presidential elections:

The French government saw two possible changes in the nation's attitude toward the EU because of Brexit: an escalation of Euroscepticism following in Britain's footsteps, or increased support for the EU and integration from raised public awareness of what being in the EU actually means.¹⁶⁹ In reality, despite the success of Brexit, Euroscepticism in France did not escalate. This is evident through the election of President Macron and the portrayal of Brexit in French newspapers. The victory of Macron's liberal and pro-European party, La Republique en Marche, against Marine Le Pen's FN in the 2017 Presidential elections demonstrates the majority of French citizens' continued support for the EU "since they voted for a candidate who openly embraced France's European identity."¹⁷⁰ Additionally, a study of center-right newspapers found that the French media largely portrayed Brexit as "an act of self-harm" by framing the post-referendum discourse as us "Europeans" versus them "Brits."¹⁷¹ The same study also argues that increased communication about domestic Euroscepticism in France raised awareness of dissenting voices to the European project and ultimately promoted "further Europeanisation by helping to develop a European democratic public."¹⁷² A survey by the Pew Research Center supports this argument as it found that the percentage of French citizens who have a favourable opinion of the EU increased from 38% in 2016 to 62% in 2018.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Pertusot, "France," 56.

¹⁷⁰ Helen Drake, "France, Britain and Brexit" in *Brexit and Beyond*, edited by Benjamin Martill and Uta Staiger (London: UCL Press, 2018), 98.

¹⁷¹ Patrick Bijsmus, Charlotte Galpin, and Benjamin Leruth, "Brexit in transnational perspective: an analysis of newspapers in France, Germany, and the Netherlands," *Comp Eur Polit*, no. 16 (2018): 840.

¹⁷² Patrick Bijsmus, Charlotte Galpin, and Benjamin Leruth, "Brexit in transnational perspective," 827.

¹⁷³ Richard Wike et al., "The European Union," *Pew Research Center*, October 14, 2019.

The success of French pro-EU leaders is mirrored in 2016 Austrian presidential elections, which saw the rise of the pro-EU Green party under President Alexander Van der Bellen, and the 2017 Dutch general elections where far-right parties were rejected by voters.¹⁷⁴ These results suggest a surge in pro-EU sentiments across Europe after the Brexit referendum.¹⁷⁵ This surge in favorable attitudes toward the EU in France and across Europe allowed the EU to maintain a hard and stubborn position in the Brexit negotiations. Despite having to compromise among 27 members the EU has continued to remain united in its resolve to ensure minimal concessions to the UK and to safeguard the EU from unravelling. This is due to the understanding that compromising on EU principles or accepting British demands that could affect other member states will ultimately jeopardize the EU's own future.¹⁷⁶ The resolve of its members to maintain the EU's stability is evident by the numerous extensions that have been granted to the Brexit deadline.¹⁷⁷ Thus, public perceptions of the EU in France became more positive after the Brexit referendum.

This newly ignited support for the EU can be explained through France's perception of Brexit as one of several crises facing the continent.¹⁷⁸ As argued by many scholars, Brexit is far from the only crisis France and the EU have faced in recent years.¹⁷⁹ Since 2008, France has been affected by the Global Financial Crisis, the Eurozone crisis, refugee crisis, and rising

¹⁷⁴ Peter Foster, Senay Boztas and Barney Henderson, "Dutch election result: Mark Rutte sees off Geert Wilders challenge as Netherlands rejects far-Right," *The Telegraph* (16 March 2017), <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/15/dutch-election-results-geert-wilders-andmark-rutte-vie-power/>.

¹⁷⁵ Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, "The implications of Brexit for the future of Europe," 70.

¹⁷⁶ Yann Sven Rittelmeyer and Fabian Zuleeg, "The EU Institutions," in *Europe's Brexit: EU perspectives on Britain's vote to leave*, edited by Tim Oliver (Newcastle: Agenda Publishing, 2018), 90.

¹⁷⁷ Tim Oliver, "What does Brexit mean for the European Union?" 162.

¹⁷⁸ Neill Nugent, "Brexit: yet another crisis for the EU," 54.

¹⁷⁹ See: Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, "The implications of Brexit for the future of Europe" and Neill Nugent, "Brexit: yet another crisis for the EU," in *Brexit and Beyond: Rethinking the futures of Europe*.

Euroscepticism. According to Oliver, Brexit qualifies as an EU crisis as this event was “dramatic, vivid, emotionally charged and carrying significant consequences.”¹⁸⁰

In France, the FN has a history of absorbing these crises into its existing Eurosceptic framework to increase the politicization of EU-level issues and augment voter pessimism in France. Thus, these crises also provide “a propitious context for Eurosceptic actors”¹⁸¹ to gain more political support. The FN’s efforts to take advantage of this propitious context is evident by its campaigns’ focus on EU-level issues that directly affect France and are most controversial among the French public. For example, in 2002 and 2007, its campaigns focused on immigration and security issues as the Schengen system of free movement of people was put under pressure because of the influx of migrants due to unrest in Turkey, the Middle East and Africa. Nativist arguments allowed the FN to portray these migrants as “destabilizers of France’s national ideology” and “a burden for France’s public finances and healthcare system.”¹⁸² The FN also framed the 2008 GFC and subsequent Eurozone crisis as arguments against the euro to mobilize even more anti-EU sentiment. Additionally, the party linked the 2015 terrorist attacks throughout France with the refugee crisis to make demands for the closure of French borders from the rest of Europe. The pinnacle of the FN’s Euroscepticism was marked by its “Brexit, now France” campaign launched after the Brexit referendum. Thus, Brexit was also a crisis to France because the referendum provided opportunity “for Eurosceptic contestation” of EU membership at home.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Tim Oliver, “What does Brexit mean for the European Union?” 169.

¹⁸¹ Gilles Ivaldi, “Contesting the EU in times of crisis,” 278.

¹⁸² Gilles Ivaldi, “Contesting the EU in times of crisis,” 285.

¹⁸³ Gilles Ivaldi, “Contesting the EU in times of crisis,” 280.

Nevertheless, as Cini and Verdun argue, crises do not stop the creation of EU-level initiatives. In fact, crises can either make the EU more fragmented or more cohesive.¹⁸⁴ The Eurozone crisis exemplifies this by creating new EU institutional initiatives, legislations, a new treaty and mechanisms to deal with sovereign debt crises. Thus, the Eurozone crisis allowed further EU integration by making the question of future relations among EU members a prime concern. In this light, Brexit also incited the resurrection of pro-EU sentiments in France by raising awareness of the meaning of EU membership. This notion is echoed by Rittelmeyer and Zuleeg who also believe that Brexit, coupled with European economic recovery and the electoral victories of pro-EU European parties in 2017, will allow the EU “to move in a direction the UK was unwilling to go.” Indeed, with the chaos that ensued Brexit and President Trump’s election, the French clearly begun to question whether this was the direction they wanted France to follow.

Post-Presidential elections–2019 European Parliament elections:

Brexit brought a pause to the rise of Euroscepticism in France during the 2017 Presidential elections by raising public awareness of the benefits of EU membership and the difficulties of leaving the union. However, French nationalist and populist sentiments continue to grow amidst crises, such as the influx of asylum seekers, terrorism, and the perceived imperiousness of the EU’s elites, that affect the entire European continent. This is evident by how, despite her failure in the 2017 elections, Marine Le Pen maintained support by continuing to advocate the decentralization of power from the EU back to individual member states in the

¹⁸⁴ Michelle Cini and Amy Verdun, “The implications of Brexit for the future of Europe,” 64.

May 2019 European Parliament elections.¹⁸⁵ However, the narratives of Le Pen's party and other right-wing European nationalists about EU membership have altered after seeing the negotiations over Brexit unfold.

Since her failure in the 2017 Presidential elections and the beginning of the Brexit negotiations Le Pen's discourse about the type of relationship France will have with the EU should her party come to power has changed. Instead of her previous calls for 'Frexit,' Le Pen's newly rebranded *Rassemblement Nationale* (RN) promotes reforming France's relation with the EU from within.¹⁸⁶ This is reminiscent of the demands made by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, for a 'Europe of Nations' in the 1990s when anti-EU sentiments had been relatively low.¹⁸⁷ This change shows how Le Pen has had to modify her narrative to adapt to the changing demands of the French public, who have now become aware of the complications and consequences of leaving the bloc. Although she continues to blame the EU for many of France's problems, Le Pen abandoned her battle for a French referendum over EU leadership because, as she states, "The French people have shown that they remain attached to the single currency."¹⁸⁸ This confirms that the majority of French citizens are not in favour of leaving the EU after seeing the political deadlocks and disarray that followed the British vote to leave.¹⁸⁹ This notion is confirmed in a survey by the Kantar Centre on the Future of Europe. When asked "how would

¹⁸⁵ Chico Harlan, "Frexit? Italeave? After watching Brexit, the other European countries say: no, thanks."

¹⁸⁶ Chico Harlan, "Frexit? Italeave? After watching Brexit, the other European countries say: no, thanks."

¹⁸⁷ Gilles Ivaldi, "Contesting the EU in times of crisis," 280.

¹⁸⁸ Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, "How the UK killed Euroscepticism across Europe" *The Irish Times* (Dublin), 1 June 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-the-uk-killed-euroscepticism-across-europe-1.3910882>.

¹⁸⁹ Frank Langfitt, "Here's why Brexit wasn't followed by Frexit, Swexit, or Nexit" *NPR* (Washington D.C.), 26 April 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/04/26/715926169/heres-why-brexit-wasnt-followed-by-frexit-swexit-or-nexit>.

you vote if there was a referendum on EU membership in your country?” 52% of the 1,000 French adults surveyed voted remain and 24% voted to leave.

Additionally, when questioned about the impact of a no-deal Brexit on the UK, 59% of French people surveyed believed it would have an ‘adverse’ effect. Interestingly, France was the most optimistic on this point in comparison to other countries surveyed. In the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain more than 70% thought a no-deal Brexit would impact the UK negatively and in Germany 82% of people thought this too. Thus, Brexit caused the idea of leaving the EU to become more unattractive to the public. It would have been impossible for Le Pen to continue selling Frexit as a way of reviving French power when it was clear across the channel that leaving the EU implied uncertainty and long-term economic decline.¹⁹⁰ This explains why the RN’s manifesto now includes reforming the EU’s institutions from within.

Marine Le Pen’s renewed narrative of the EU is also reflected by her new alliance in the EU Parliament, the Identity and Democracy Party (ID). This party gathers right-wing anti-EU leaders, including members of Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini’s Lega Nord and Germany’s Alternative for Germany (AfD). Nationalist party members from Austria, Finland, Denmark and Belgium are also represented. This party unites around the objectives of reviving national sovereignty, curbing immigration and halting the spread of Islam.¹⁹¹ It replaces Le Pen’s previous alliance, the Europe Alliance for Freedom (EAF), which was the smallest faction in the EU Parliament after the May 2014 elections and held 37 seats. In the May 2019 elections, the ID party gained 73 of the 751 seats and became the fifth-largest party in the newly elected

¹⁹⁰Ruadhán Mac Cormaic, “How the UK killed Euroscepticism across Europe.”

¹⁹¹ “France’s Le Pen unveils new far-right European Parliament group.” *Thomson Reuters* (Brussels), 13 June, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-jobs-lepen/frances-le-pen-unveils-new-far-right-european-parliament-group-idUSKCN1TE1IG>.

parliament.¹⁹² The gains made by the ID party in the 2019 EU Parliament elections underline the fact that anti-EU sentiments persist in France and across Europe. However, the meaning of “anti-EU” has largely changed because of Brexit that has become a cautionary tale of chaos for leaving the EU.¹⁹³ Today, instead of implying a departure from the union, the EU’s right-wing nationalist leaders seek flexibility, through the ability to pick which EU agreements they partake in, and a return to greater state control over national matters.

The impact of Brexit on French attitudes toward the EU have changed since the 2016 Brexit referendum and the 2019 European Parliament elections. Prior to the 2016 referendum, Euroscepticism had been steadily rising in France in the form of the far-right Front National. The fear of Marine Le Pen winning the 2017 presidential elections and possibly carrying out ‘Frexit,’ following the precedent for leaving the EU created by Brexit, explains France’s unfavorable views of the referendum. However, despite the success of the Brexit referendum, French Euroscepticism was momentarily paused after the referendum and replaced by pro-EU sentiments. This was because Brexit raised public awareness of the benefits of EU membership and the understanding of Brexit as only one of many crises facing the bloc. Additionally, it was difficult to persuade the public to support France’s exit from the EU when the difficulties of trying to do so were clarified by Brexit. This explains Marine Le Pen’s loss to President Macron in 2017. Nevertheless, the election of Macron did not imply the end of anti-EU sentiments in France. Euroscepticism and French nationalism continue to influence the FN’s agenda, but at a more toned-down level. Instead of seeking France’s exit from the EU as it did after the 2016

¹⁹² “France’s Le Pen unveils new far-right European Parliament group.” *Thomson Reuters* (Brussels), 13 June, 2019.

¹⁹³ Frank Langfitt, “Here’s why Brexit wasn’t followed by Frexit, Swexit, or Nexit.”

referendum, the party now seeks to reform the EU from within. This changed narrative reflects the unpopularity of leaving the bloc among the French public who have witnessed themselves the consequences of this act.

Chapter 5: The impact of Brexit on French security and defense

This chapter investigates the impact of Brexit on French security and also the EU's security and defense capacities. It first highlights how Brexit will negatively impact the EU's overall defense capabilities but present two opportunities for France to strengthening its bilateral defense relationship with the UK as well as further defense cooperation among the remaining EU 27. Then the chapter explores why the bilateral Anglo-French defense relationship is important and the challenges to deepening this relationship. Despite these challenges, the political will of both France and the UK have allowed the Anglo-French defense ties to remain strong. Next, the section examines the history of defense relationship between France and other EU members to explain why Franco-German cooperation is crucial after Brexit. It also gives proof that Germany is ready and willing to slowly take over the UK's co-leadership of EU defense with France. Finally, the essay makes predictions about the future of European defense post-Brexit. It argues that there will be increased defense cooperation between France and the other remaining EU members, a deepening of the bilateral Anglo-French defense relationship and continued British contributions toward EU defense efforts. Thus, even though the security of Europe as a whole is weakened by the departure of the UK, France's security and defense can benefit from this scenario. This is because France will continue to be an integral player in European defense while also developing stronger bilateral defense relations with Britain.

Brexit negatively impacts EU defense capabilities but provides opportunities for France:

Brexit will negatively affect the EU's defense because the UK is the largest European defense spender and owns approximately 20% of the EU's overall defense capabilities. The UK's departure will mean the end to access of valuable assets such as Northwood operational

headquarters, which is one of five of the EU's military headquarters, and British Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) technology. Although France also possesses its own ISR capabilities, the EU's defense capabilities as a whole are reduced by Brexit. Hence, it will be much harder for the remaining EU27 to meet the ambitious plans it set in the 2016 EU Global Strategy and Implementation Plan on Security and Defense.¹⁹⁴ Additionally, with the UK excluded from the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), the remaining EU27 may struggle in the short term to replace the technical and military expertise given by this country to CSDP initiatives, such as the EU Military Committee (EUMC) and European Defense Fund (EDF).¹⁹⁵ These expertise are difficult to replace in the short term and will cause the slowdown of progress within these initiatives. However, Brexit also provides two opportunities for France: the first is for the bilateral Anglo-French defense relationship to grow independently of the EU and the second is for further defense cooperation among the remaining EU27.

The importance of the Anglo-French defense relationship:

The Anglo-French defense relationship has a long history and dates back to the First World War. Increased cooperation between France and the UK in the security arena began as a result of common values and norms, such as individual freedom, liberty and equality. Although France and Britain do not always share perfectly aligned interests when it comes to security and defense, the maintenance and strengthening of an Anglo-French bilateral defense partnership are integral. It is in France's interest because the UK makes up approximately a quarter of the EU's

¹⁹⁴ "Implementation Plan on Security and Defense," *European Union External Action* (6 March 2018), https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34215/implementation-plan-security-and-defense-factsheet_en.

¹⁹⁵ Anne Bakker, Magriet Drent, and Dick Zandee, "Brexit in Numbers" in *European defense: how to engage the UK after Brexit?* (The Netherlands: Clingendael Institute, 2017), 3.

defense expenditure and 10% of its troops. Furthermore, British troops are highly trained and make up a high share of the EU's deployable forces overseas. The high quality of British troops is indicated by the average spending of 155,000 euros per British soldier, which is more than the EU average of 133,000 euros.¹⁹⁶ Along with France it is the only EU nation capable and willing to lead European, and non-NATO, military efforts abroad through the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force. Hence, it is very much in the interest of France to continue maintaining access to the UK's defense and security capabilities on both a bilateral and European level. On the other hand, further Anglo-French defense cooperation is in the interest of the UK because although it has left the EU, it remains geographically in Europe.¹⁹⁷ This means that any security threats against Europe will also threaten the UK. This can be seen with the migrant crisis that affects the UK despite being an island separated from mainland Europe.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the UK must continue to contribute to EU defense because it affects its own security.

The UK and France are the two biggest European military powers in NATO and account for over half of European defense budget and capabilities.¹⁹⁹ The EU itself could only develop a shared defense policy because France and the UK agreed so at St. Malo in 1998.²⁰⁰ Their unique capacities and willingness to deploy European military forces abroad is demonstrated by their leadership of Europe's intervention in Libya (2011) and in Syria (2018).²⁰¹ They also share

¹⁹⁶ Sven Biscop, "Out of the EU, but in Europe" in *Brexit, strategy, and the EU: Britain takes leave* (Brussels: Egmont Institute, 2018), 9.

¹⁹⁷ Sven Biscop, "Out of the EU, but in Europe," 9.

¹⁹⁸ Richard Pérez-Peña, "As migrants reach UK by boat, numbers are small but worry is big," *The New York Times* (31 December 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/31/world/europe/uk-english-channel-migrants.html>.

¹⁹⁹ Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation," *Carnegie Europe* (18 January 2018).

²⁰⁰ Daniel Keohane, "Three's company? France, Germany, the UK and European defense post-Brexit," *Elcano Royal Institute* (5 January 2017).

²⁰¹ Alice Pannier, "France's Defense Partnership and the Dilemmas of Brexit," *German Marshall Fund of the United States* (2018), 2.

important strategic interests in Europe and globally that are influenced by their special positions as nuclear-armed nations and permanent UN Security Council members.²⁰² This is why France and the UK must continue their cooperation, especially as threats, including terrorism, climate change, and the migration crisis, facing the European continent increase.²⁰³ Both governments have already confirmed the need to maintain close defense ties between France and the UK. In a September 2017 UK government paper, London clarified its desire to continue contributing to EU military operations. In France, President Macron invited the UK to join his European Intervention Initiative, which would increase the ability of Europe to carry out military interventions overseas without help from the United States.²⁰⁴ Evidently both France and the UK understand the importance of their bilateral defense relationship and are taking steps to deepen this relationship.

Deepening Anglo-French defense relations: challenges and achievements

According to Dobbs, Brexit presents challenges to the deepening of Anglo-French defense relations for multiple reasons.²⁰⁵ First, Brexit could increase mistrust between France and the UK by emphasizing the image of the UK as a hindrance to EU integration and of France as an irritating hardline negotiator. Second, it threatens to overuse the political capital and human resources of both the French and British governments. As every governmental department becomes preoccupied with the departure procedures, Brexit could reduce engagement on

²⁰² Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation," *Carnegie Europe* (18 January 2018).

²⁰³ George Robertson and Bernard Cazeneuve, "The UK- The UK-France alliance is crucial to Europe's security. Brexit must not threaten it," *The Guardian* (8 November, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/08/uk-france-europe-security-brexit>.

²⁰⁴ Daniel Keohane, "The ambiguities of Franco-British defense cooperation."

²⁰⁵ Joseph Dobbs, "The UK, France and the challenge of Brexit to European security," *European Leadership Network* (2016), 3.

bilateral matters. Third, Brexit could set France and the UK off in different directions in regard to their defense policies if one nation prioritizes EU cooperation while the other prioritizes NATO cooperation. And finally, as the UK is no longer attends EU-level discussions, Brexit means French ministers and diplomats are “significantly less networked” with those of the British.²⁰⁶

Fortunately, despite the challenges to Anglo-French cooperation caused by Brexit there remains consistent political will from both nations to continue coordinating their defense capabilities. On the French side, this is evident by the reactions of the French Ministry of Defense (MOD) to the 2016 Brexit referendum.²⁰⁷ The MOD’s narrative post-Brexit emphasized the unique status of the UK and France as the only two countries willing and capable to maintain a European defense policy and to use military force abroad. It also focused on the importance of the Anglo-French bilateral defense partnership. These points were made clear by French Defense Minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian, who said in a July 2016 press conference that the Anglo-French partnership “will continue to exist,” given the desire from both parties to cooperate further.²⁰⁸ The UK also shares France’s desires to continue Anglo-French defense and security cooperation post-Brexit. In the July 2018 Chequers Agreement, which elaborates the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, then Prime Minister Theresa May called for “a tailored partnership” on foreign policy and defense with the EU.²⁰⁹ This would take the

²⁰⁶ Joseph Dobbs, “The UK, France and the challenge of Brexit to European security,” 3.

²⁰⁷ Jeremy Ghez et al., “Defense and security after Brexit: a snapshot of international perspectives on the implications of the UK’s decision to leave the EU,” *RAND Corporation* (2017).

²⁰⁸ Agence France Presse, “Brexit: La coopération militaire franco-britannique pas menacée,” *L’Orient Le Jour* (1 July 2016), <https://www.lorientlejour.com/article/994379/brexit-la-cooperation-militaire-franco-britannique-pas-menacee-paris.html>.

²⁰⁹ “The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union,” *Her Majesty’s Government* (2018), https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786626/The_Future_Relationship_between_the_United_Kingdom_and_the_European_Union_120319.pdf.

form of continued British military involvement in EU defense initiatives on a case-by-case basis in order to uphold the sovereignties of both parties. This declaration shows the UK's awareness of the need to remain involved in European defense but also maintain the sovereignty and independence from the EU that it received after Brexit. Additionally, in the November 2018 Political declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union, the British government stated its wish to "establish a broad, comprehensive, and balanced security partnership" with the EU that includes an "ambitious, close and lasting cooperation on external action."²¹⁰ The narratives of both the French and British governments regarding cooperation in EU defense has remained hopeful and positive throughout the Brexit procedures. This political will to further their defense ties is what explains the success of their efforts despite the challenges that Brexit presents.

Both the UK and France's desires for a stronger defense relationship are already manifested in legislation. In 2010, the two nations signed the Lancaster House Treaties. The first of these treaties is a defense and security agreement that promises cooperation in the form of joint training exercises, work on military doctrine, exchange programs for military personnel, access to each other's defense markets, and resource pooling for military operations. The second treaty increases Anglo-French cooperation on nuclear and radiological counterterrorism efforts, regulations on nuclear weapons and by building a joint radiographic and hydrodynamics facility.²¹¹ The Lancaster House Treaties demonstrate how the bilateral Anglo-French defense relationship was growing closer as the UK simultaneously distanced itself from the EU. More

²¹⁰ "Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union," *Her Majesty's Government* (2018), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-political-declaration-setting-out-the-framework-for-the-future-relationship-between-the-european-union-and-the-united-kingdom-agreed-at-negotia>.

²¹¹ Jeremy Ghez et al., "Defense and security after Brexit."

importantly, these treaties have also created concrete results that emphasize the political will of France and the UK to continue their defense partnership. For example, the creation of a Combined Joint Expeditionary Force with air, sea and land capabilities allows the deployment of French and British personnel in bilateral, EU, NATO or UN-led operations.²¹²

In the period after the Lancaster Treaties, evidence of deepening defense cooperation between France and the UK is seen in their leadership of the 2011 NATO-led military intervention in Libya and the UK's sharing of intelligence capabilities during France's military operations in Mali (2012) and the Central Africa Republic (2013).²¹³ A number of other developments between the two nations are also indicative of a deepening defense relations. For example, in 2012 the UK and France announced a combat drone development program and more personnel who would be involved in the exchange program. And in 2015 they signed an agreement to join their missile industries via the multinational company MBDA and to develop a future Cruise/Anti-Ship weapon together.²¹⁴ Even in the aftermath of the 2016 referendum, Anglo-French defense cooperation continued to deepen. In November 2016, London and Paris announced plans to deepen their dependence on one another's missile technologies.²¹⁵ And in January 2018 during the 35th Franco-British summit, the two countries affirmed how "in an increasingly unstable world this strong and enduring partnership between two great nations is

²¹² Emmanuel Dupuy, "The implications of Brexit on UK-France defense cooperation," *European Leadership Network* (25 November 2016).

²¹³ Jeremy Ghez et al., "Defense and security after Brexit."

²¹⁴ "France and the United Kingdom," *The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (3 December 2018), <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/united-kingdom/france-and-united-kingdom/article/france-and-united-kingdom>.

²¹⁵ Daniel Keohane, "Three's company? France, Germany, the UK and European defense post-Brexit."

more important than ever.” These actions confirm Brexit did not prevent bilateral cooperation from deepening.²¹⁶

Nevertheless, the development of Franco-British defense ties has stalled since the 2016 Brexit referendum. On the one hand, this is due to uncertainties about the future of British involvements in EU initiatives.²¹⁷ The ongoing departure process has led to a halt in growing Anglo-French defense cooperation because many aspects of this negotiation, such as the sharing of military personnel and equipment, can only happen after the UK departs the bloc. On the other hand, this pause can also be seen as a spillover of France’s hard stance in the Brexit negotiations. Indeed, although France and the UK continue to maintain their existing defense relationship, the day-to-day working relations of those in the French and British defense industries are strained because of the tense and ongoing negotiations between their governments.²¹⁸ This situation highlights the urgent need for a mutually beneficial exit deal that appeases the British and EU governments for bilateral defense partnerships, in particular that between the UK and France, to resume.

France-EU defense relations post-Brexit: why cooperation with Germany is now necessary

The continuation of defense cooperation between France and the EU post-Brexit is important because of Europe’s identity as the defender of a liberal international order and the difficulty of successful European military intervention abroad without it. Lehne argues that since

²¹⁶ Sven Biscop, “Out of the EU, but in Europe” in *Brexit, strategy, and the EU: Britain takes leave* (Brussels: Egmont Institute, 2018), 11.

²¹⁷ Sandrine Amiel, “How will Brexit affect Europe’s defense?” *Euronews* (10 December 2019), <https://www.euronews.com/2019/12/04/how-will-brexit-impact-europe-s-defence-euronews-answers>.

²¹⁸ Alice Pannier, “European defence cooperation after Brexit: the politics of acronyms,” *Atlantic Community* (20 February 2019), <https://atlantic-community.org/european-defence-cooperation-after-brexit-the-politics-of-acronyms/>.

the peak of this EU-led liberal international order in the early 2000s, efforts to integrate its members' foreign and security policies were outpaced by the breakdown of the international security environment.²¹⁹ Europe's security environment was disrupted by an assertive Russia that led the EU into geopolitical competition, a Turkey that is moving away from its European orientation, turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa that has caused mass migration into the EU, and now Brexit. These changes are not fleeting. Instead, they reflect a global trend which the EU is slow to react to. This is the reason why the EU today appears as "a besieged postmodern island in a world ruled by realpolitik."²²⁰ This notion is exemplified by the European Neighborhood Policy that started as an initiative to transform neighboring countries into democratic market economies that would eventually gain benefits of special relationships with the EU. However, this goal has been reduced to only a few advanced countries such as Ukraine, Georgia and Tunisia.²²¹ The European Neighborhood Policy is just one example of how the EU is no longer the vanguard of a liberal order it once was. It underlines how, instead of trying to influence neighbors with its ideas, the EU now worries about the influence that its neighbors' ideas could have on itself.²²² This ending of the global liberal order, demonstrated further by the election of President Trump, means it is more important than ever for Europe to be prepared to act militarily independently without the help of the U.S. This emphasizes the need for continued European defense coordination.

France and the EU must also continue defense cooperation because without it, European intervention abroad can easily go awry. An example of this is seen in the EU's 2011 military

²¹⁹ Stefan Lehne, "Is there hope for EU foreign policy?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (2017), 5.

²²⁰ Stefan Lehne, "Is there hope for EU foreign policy?" 5.

²²¹ Stefan Lehne, "Is there hope for EU foreign policy?" 6.

²²² Stefan Lehne, "Is there hope for EU foreign policy?" 6.

intervention in Libya where certain EU actors, namely France and the UK, pushed for the takedown of Muammar Qaddafi. However, the EU proved unable to deal with the post-revolutionary chaos that ensued. Instead, the EU soon began to prioritize its defense efforts on stopping Libyan migrants from entering Italy.²²³ This failure underlines the need for cooperation on the EU's defense and security especially when deployed abroad. Finally, France must continue to increase cooperation of EU defense because it is vital for Europe's security. In the current age of "great power competition" the EU faces growing strategic and negotiating challenges from China, Russia, and an increasingly unpredictable United States.²²⁴ This means that only by acting together as a united Europe can any EU member state, including France, hope to maintain influence in the global arena.

After Brexit, the UK will no longer play the same leading role in EU defense. The question for the EU is which nation will assume the position left by the UK.²²⁵ Despite the end of the UK's 'dissenting voice' in EU decision making, it will not be easy for the remaining EU27 to reach agreements on defense and security issues.²²⁶ This is because differing opinions, particularly in regard to defense economics and migration, continue to exist among the EU27. This is why the improvement of the Franco-German defense relationship is vitally important. It can facilitate the reconciliation of varying strategic cultures and diverging interests between Germany and France, and lead to more productive developments in EU defense.

²²³ Stefan Lehne, "Is there hope for EU foreign policy?" 7.

²²⁴ Carl Bildt, "Europe risks irrelevance in the age of great power competition," *European Council on Foreign Relations* (22 July 2019), https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europe_risks_irrelevance_in_the_age_of_great_power_competition.

²²⁵ Sven Biscop, "Out of the EU, but in Europe," 10.

²²⁶ Jeremy Ghez et al., "Defense and security after Brexit."

After World War II, Germany was demilitarized and became sensitive about the crimes committed by the Nazis as well as the devastation caused to millions of civilians.²²⁷ Due to this history, the German public remains reluctant to use military force abroad.²²⁸ Despite this, it deployed forces to Afghanistan in 2001, Mali in 2013 and in 2015 against the Islamic State in Iraq. Biscop argues that two decades ago these types of overseas military interventions would “have been unimaginable” and serves as evidence of the return of public willingness to use its forces abroad.²²⁹ Additionally, a July 2016 Eurobarometer polling of citizens from the EU27 found almost three-quarters of Europeans agree with a common security and defense policy. About two-thirds agree with a common foreign policy. These levels are similar among all member states.²³⁰ This polling underlines how the European public, including Germany, support a common European defense policy.

Not only is Germany’s public ready to support greater EU defense cooperation, Germany’s leader Angela Merkel has also show readiness for greater coordination of European defense and foreign policy. Merkel has been German Chancellor since 2005 and her re-election in March 2018 along with the 2017 election of President Macron in France have re-energized the Franco-German defense relationship.²³¹ In October 2017, Merkel stated the “biggest challenge facing the EU in the coming years will be to forge a coherent foreign policy.”²³² This statement demonstrates Germany’s willingness to prioritize the defense and security of the EU and

²²⁷ Chris Bowlby, “Germany: reluctant military giant?” *BBC Radio 4 Analysis* (12 June 2017), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40172317>.

²²⁸ Sven Biscop, “Out of the EU, but in Europe,” 10.

²²⁹ Sven Biscop, “Out of the EU, but in Europe,” 10.

²³⁰ “Standard Eurobarometer 85,” *European Commission* (27 July 2016),

<https://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2130>.

²³¹ Stefan Lehne, “Is there hope for EU foreign policy?” 15.

²³² Esther King, “Angela Merkel: Europe needs coherent foreign policy,” *Politico* (9 October 2017), <https://www.politico.eu/article/angela-merkel-europe-needs-coherent-foreign-policy/>.

participate in strengthening ties among members. Furthermore, in his speech at the Sorbonne University in September 2017, Macron began calls for a renewal of the Elysée Treaty.²³³ This treaty was a bilateral agreement signed in 1963 under President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. It ended decades of conflicts and rivalries and marked the beginning of Franco-German rapprochement.

In January 2019, the Elysée Treaty was renewed by the signing of the Aachen Treaty by President Macron and Chancellor Merkel. This treaty, among other things, promises regular meetings between French and German senior military officers, coordination of foreign policy and increased cooperation in military operations. The signing of the Aachen Treaty demonstrates the rejuvenation of the Franco-German defense relationship, which in past decades has not seen the same growth as the Anglo-French defense relationship. More importantly, this treaty highlights both the German government's willingness to contribute more to European defense efforts as well as the French government's acceptance of this role.

Despite this progress, a leadership challenge from Germany remains a potential obstacle to French security and defense benefitting from Brexit. As Germany is one of the leaders of European defense along with France, the UK's departure will leave a power vacuum in decision making that remaining EU member states, like Germany, can fill. Unfortunately, there are some major differences in the strategic cultures of Berlin and Paris. For instance, France possesses nuclear capabilities and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. According to Keohane, this makes France feel a unique responsibility over global security and is willing and ready to act unilaterally.²³⁴ On the other hand, Germany's track record shows its reluctance to

²³³ Emmanuel Macron, "Speech on new initiative for Europe," *Sorbonne University* (26 September 2017), <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/president-macron-gives-speech-on-new-initiative-for-europe.en>.

²³⁴ Daniel Keohane, "Three's company? France, Germany, the UK and European defense post-Brexit."

use military force abroad and its willingness to act only in ad hoc coalitions. Additionally, Germany perceives the goal of EU defense policy as greater political integration while France desires an actual strengthening of defense coordination among EU member states. These differences in defense culture is why Keohane thinks it will be even more challenging for France and Germany to develop and agree on a more active EU defense policy.²³⁵

Evidence of successful Franco-German defense leadership

Historically the UK has, unlike France, been against further European integration and has blocked proposals that would deepen the coordination of European defense. For instance, the UK has always disliked any talk of an EU military headquarters and repeatedly blocked increases in the budget and mandates of the European Defense Agency (EDA). This has inevitably disallowed the agency from achieving hard defense.²³⁶ With Britain, the second largest contributor to the CSDP, and its veto power excluded from EU decision making, “a major impediment to deeper defense cooperation” will disappear.²³⁷ This means there may no longer be sufficient votes from the remaining EU27 to counter the pro-integration initiatives led by France and Germany. Evidence of successful Franco-German defense leadership can be seen in their proposals to begin structural integration of defense in core groups through the creation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in 2018. PESCO facilitates joint financing for EU military operations and allows more capable EU members to coordinate on more ambitious projects.²³⁸ This agreement and the EU Commission’s readiness to fund projects that develop

²³⁵ Daniel Keohane, “Three’s company? France, Germany, the UK and European defense post-Brexit.”

²³⁶ Anne Bakker, Magriet Drent, and Dick Zandee, “Brexit in Numbers,” 8.

²³⁷ Anne Bakker, Magriet Drent, and Dick Zandee, “Brexit in Numbers,” 8.

²³⁸ Stefan Lehne, “Is there hope for EU foreign policy?” 17.

defense capabilities through the European Defense Fund (EDF) demonstrate the EU's readiness to follow in the footsteps of deeper Franco-German defense cooperation and leadership.

The future of French defense

As a continuing leader of EU defense and security post-Brexit, the future of France is characterized by deepening Anglo-French cooperation and increasing European defense cooperation. The earlier exploration of growing Anglo-French defense cooperation after the signing of the Lancaster House Treaties and the declarations made by both governments after the 2016 Brexit referendum demonstrate the political will of both nations to continue in this direction. Unfortunately, the strengthening of Anglo-French defense relationship has stalled in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum. Thus, only after the UK's final departure from the bloc can we see whether the promises made by the French and British governments manifest into stronger bilateral defense ties.

Additionally, France must be ready to lead the increase of defense cooperation among the remaining EU27 because without this, Europe would become much less able to cope with the array of security challenges it faces. This cooperation is vital because, as Keohane points out, most EU military operations to counter pirates, terrorists, and people smugglers (among other tasks) occur outside of the EU's territory and require contributions from numerous EU member states.²³⁹ Thus, deeper coordination of European security and defense is in everyone's best national security interests and needs to occur for the safety of Europe.

Finally, taking aside its special bilateral relationship with the EU, France's defense and security within the scope of the EU will continue to receive contributions from the UK. This is

²³⁹ Daniel Keohane, "Three's company? France, Germany, the UK and European defense post-Brexit."

because it is in the interests of both the EU and UK for the UK to continue contributing to European defense capabilities and projects. For example, the EU has an arrangement for non-EU members to participate in CSDP operations that has been used by several Asian and South American countries to contribute to the EU's anti-piracy Atalanta operation.²⁴⁰ However, the UK finds this arrangement insufficient because, although it allows non-EU states to contribute to an operation, it does not permit them to be involved in the decision making. Nevertheless, if London desires special treatment then it must offer something back to the EU. Biscop suggests the continued use of the EU's operational headquarters in Northwood post-Brexit. He asserts that only if the UK promises "permanent concrete contributions" will the EU consider allowing it in the relevant EU committees.²⁴¹

Hence, due to the nature of European security in an increasingly volatile world and the need for the UK to continue contributing to these efforts, on balance France's own security is not necessarily impacted negatively by Brexit. Although the security of Europe as a whole is weakened by the departure of the UK, France's individual security and defense will also benefit. This is because France will continue to be an integral player in European defense, retaining access to many of the UK's military capabilities via the EU, while also continuing to strengthen bilateral defense relations with the UK outside of the EU.

Although the EU's overall defense capabilities are reduced because of Brexit, France's defense may actually gain from the UK's departure. This is due to the opportunities Brexit presents for France to strengthen its bilateral defense relationship with the UK as well as lead the increase of defense cooperation among the EU 27. France has maintained a hard stance in the

²⁴⁰ Sven Biscop, "Out of the EU, but in Europe," 10.

²⁴¹ Sven Biscop, "Out of the EU, but in Europe," 10.

Brexit negotiations and, along with the other members of the EU, emphasized the need for the UK to be all in or all out of the UK. However, this hard stance does not appear to extend into the area of defense and security. In fact, both France and the UK understood, even before the 2016 referendum, that defense was an area that needed continued cooperation for the safety of Europe. The political will of both these countries explains why despite the challenges to deepening the Anglo-French defense relationship, there is much evidence of successful progress in this regard. Additionally, after Brexit France will continue its leadership role of EU defense. However, it will lose the UK as a key negotiating partner. The UK's leadership is likely to be replaced by Germany whose public and leadership are ready to take on the role of co-leading EU defense with France. Like the strengthening of the Anglo-French bilateral defense relationship, there is also evidence to support the feasibility of Franco-German leadership of EU defense. This means that despite the potential challenges faced by France and Germany because of differing strategic cultures, successful Franco-German leadership of EU defense is possible. In future, because of Brexit France's defense will be strengthened through deepening Anglo-French bilateral cooperation, increased cooperation among the remaining EU27, and continued access to British defense resources via the EU. Therefore, Brexit provides France with opportunities to secure gains in the area of security and defense.

Chapter 6: The impact of Brexit on free movement of people between France and the UK

The right to freedom of movement facilitates the frictionless movement of goods, services, capital and labor within the EU. These freedoms have allowed the markets of EU member states to function as one in the European Single Market. However, liberal values such as equal rights and individual freedoms underpinning the freedom of movement have been contested in the UK and France, as well as other European nations, since the early 2010s.²⁴² This is because these EU freedoms can sometimes challenge the ideas of national sovereignty and national identity as member states must give up some of their decision making powers when joining the EU. Also, arguments over the abuse of welfare benefits by EU citizens, who behave like “welfare tourists,” have led to an increase in support of social protectionism across the continent.²⁴³ In the UK, the desire to regain national sovereignty over migration and border control contributed to the success of the 2016 Brexit referendum. And in France the nation’s limited ability to deal with problems, such as the influx of migrants and border control, has led to growing public dissatisfaction with EU membership.

This chapter explores how Brexit will impact free movement of people in France and the UK. First, it explores what the end of free movement of people could spell for the citizens of these countries. It looks at the impact of Brexit in case of a deal and no-deal situation. Then, the chapter presents an analysis of the UK’s and France’s present schemes for citizens to remain in their current countries of residence post-Brexit. This is to underline how, in either the case of a deal or no-deal Brexit, the future movement of French and British citizens into one another’s

²⁴² Christof Roos, “EU freedoms at a critical juncture? The positions of member state governments on EU person and services mobility,” in *Culture, Practice and Europeanization* 3, no. 1 (2018): 19.

²⁴³ Christof Roos, “EU freedoms at a critical juncture? The positions of member state governments on EU person and services mobility,” 24.

countries will be more difficult. In light of this, the French government has already begun initiatives to capitalize on the potential end of free movement with the UK, such as through the “Join the Game” campaign. The success of this campaign and its benefits for the French videogame industry demonstrate how certain French industries can gain from the end of free movement. Additionally, France can also benefit from Brexit because it may mark an end to London’s position as Europe’s financial center. Cities like Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam are prime destinations for the relocation of finance firms currently in the UK. However, the benefits of relocation for France can only go so far because there is limited housing and public infrastructure in Paris. Hence, the French government must take care of balancing the relocation of expatriates from the UK and the displacement of lower-income residents in Paris. Finally, the end of free movement will also impact undocumented people in France and the UK. Brexit means that the two countries need to renegotiate the existing agreements on how they are to deal with this group of people.

Debates on the movement of people:

The free movement of people is a fundamental principle of the EU as enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.²⁴⁴ This freedom has allowed Europeans to easily work and reside in other EU countries. Brexit may mean, at least in the short run, an end to these privileges for French and British citizens. This may create job losses as the approximately 300,000 French citizens living in the UK and the 157,000 British citizens living in France who fail to attain work permits return to their countries.²⁴⁵ Repatriation would create uneven job

²⁴⁴ European Union. “Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union, 7 February 1992.” *Official Journal of the European Communities*, Article 45.

²⁴⁵ “Brexit bargaining chips – French in UK vs. Brits in France,” *The Local France* (3 March, 2017), <https://www.thelocal.fr/20170303/french-expats-vs-british-expats-whos-got-the-bigger-bargaining->

losses as there almost double the number of French expatriates in the UK than vice versa. Also, in 2017, France was the largest beneficiary of remittances from the UK and sent home over \$1.8 billion that year.²⁴⁶ In the event of a no-deal Brexit, up to 141,230 French citizens are predicted to lose their jobs. And in the event that the UK remains in the Single Market, up to 34,500 French citizens could still lose their jobs.²⁴⁷ In either case, both France and the UK will still lose jobs in the immediate aftermath of the UK's departure due to logistical problems that require time to correct.

There have been no formal agreements between the UK and EU on how to safeguard the individual rights of their citizens after the UK's departure. The British government has called for freedom of movement of people to be maintained on a European level even if the UK's exit deal is rejected as an entirety. However, the EU has rejected these demands for the practical reason that the deal and freedom of movement cannot be separated.²⁴⁸ Also, in case of a no-deal scenario, it should be the responsibility of individual nations to decide how they wish to treat British citizens living within their borders. Awareness of the potential problems caused by the end of free movement of people helps explain why May's government published the Policy Paper on Citizens' Rights in December 2018. This paper seeks to "remove any ambiguity" over the legal status of EU citizens residing in the UK regardless of what deal the UK leaves the EU

chips#targetText=The%20most%20recent%20survey%2C%20carried,living%20in%20France%20at%20157%2C000.

²⁴⁶ Allison McCann, Milan Schreuer and Amis Tsang, "Where Europe would be hurt most by a no-deal Brexit," *The New York Times* (7 February, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/02/07/world/europe/brexit-impact-on-european-union.html>.

²⁴⁷ "More than 140,000 jobs will be lost in France in a no-deal Brexit," *The Local France* (2 August, 2019), <https://www.thelocal.fr/20190802/more-than-140000-jobs-will-be-lost-in-france-in-case-of-no-deal-brexit>.

²⁴⁸ Alasdair Sandford, "What would a no-deal Brexit mean for EU and UK citizens' rights?" *Euronews* (4 December, 2019), <https://www.euronews.com/2019/01/10/what-would-a-no-deal-brexit-mean-for-citizens-rights>.

with or without.²⁴⁹ The paper states that EU citizens and their families are permitted to stay in the UK and have access to “work, study, benefits and services.” Even in the case of a no deal, the UK will still implement its Settlement Scheme for EU Nationals, which mandates a 5-year residency before allowing EU citizens to acquire “settled” status in the UK.

May’s government also suggested phasing out free movement instead of ending it immediately post-Brexit. However, on 19 August, the UK Home Office under Prime Minister Johnson published in a statement that the UK would be “leaving the EU on 31 October come what may. This means that freedom of movement as it currently stands was meant to end on 31 October with the previous exit deadline.”²⁵⁰ This announcement shocked the more than 3 million EU residents in the UK who worried about the government’s ability to correctly distinguish between new arrivals and those already residents of the UK. Despite the British government’s assurances that these people would be welcome in the UK, analysts believe that there was enough public discontent with the announcement that the government could face legal challenges from EU citizens who currently live in the UK.²⁵¹ Hence, the British government renounced these plans the following month and has now re-assured the European public that the end of freedom of movement of people will be a phased process. In addition, Johnson’s government has also pledged to cover the healthcare costs of over 180,000 British nationals living in the EU for six months should the UK leave without a deal.²⁵² Nevertheless, the government has also confirmed that new arrivals into the UK from the EU post-Brexit will not be granted right to

²⁴⁹ Department for Exiting the European Union, *Policy paper on citizens’ rights in the event of a no-deal Brexit*, Policy Paper (London: 6 December, 2018).

²⁵⁰ Rebecca Staudenmaier, “Brexit: UK to end EU freedom of movement immediately in no-deal scenario,” *Deutsche Welle* (20 August, 2019), <https://www.dw.com/en/brexit-uk-to-end-eu-freedom-of-movement-immediately-in-no-deal-scenario/a-50090564>.

²⁵¹ Alasdair Sanford, “What would a no-deal Brexit mean for EU and UK citizens’ rights?”

²⁵² Alasdair Sanford, “What would a no-deal Brexit mean for EU and UK citizens’ rights?”

permanent residence immediately. This confirms that in either case of deal or no-deal Brexit, the future movement of French citizens in and out of the UK will be made more difficult.

The UK and France's Settlement Schemes

To manage EU citizens post-Brexit, the British government has implemented the EU Settlement Scheme.²⁵³ This scheme allows EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their families to apply for approval to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. Applicants who are successful will be granted either “pre-settled” or “settled” status depending on the number of years they have resided in the UK. Despite the convenience of this plan, citizens’ rights activists have doubts over the possibility of its execution.²⁵⁴ More precisely, these activists claim that the process of applying for settle status is slow and complicated. Furthermore, EU citizens who fail to apply for the scheme before its June 2021 deadline will have problems re-entering the UK if they leave the country because they technically are no longer entitled to the same rights and freedoms as British citizens.²⁵⁵ Hence the EU Settlement Scheme leaves those EU citizens hoping to relocate to the UK after June 2021 in legal limbo.

Similarly, the French government also created a new website to process applications for UK citizens to receive *cartes de séjour*, or residence permits, after Brexit. The government has begun collecting applications but will not begin processing them until after Brexit. If the UK leaves the EU with a deal, applications will continue being processed throughout the transition period. And in the case of a no-deal Brexit, British citizens living in France must apply for a residence permit

²⁵³ “Stay in the UK after it leaves the EU (settled status),” *Her Majesty’s Government*, accessed on 10 December, 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus>.

²⁵⁴ Rebecca Staudenmaier, “Brexit: UK to end EU freedom of movement immediately in no-deal scenario.”

²⁵⁵ Rebecca Staudenmaier, “Brexit: UK to end EU freedom of movement immediately in no-deal scenario.”

within 6 months of the UK's departure.²⁵⁶ The creation of the EU Settlement Scheme in the UK and the renewed online process of acquiring a residence permit in France demonstrate these governments' preparedness to deal with the end of free movement of people post-Brexit. On top of this, it is evident that regardless of what type of deal the UK leaves with, the movement of French people into the UK and vice versa will be made more complicated.

Capturing the benefits of Brexit: France's Join the Game campaign

French government officials have tried to capitalize on the future uncertainty that Brexit brings to highly skilled EU citizens in the UK by putting in place measures to attract this group of people to relocate to France. Since his election in 2017, Macron's government has slashed the nation's wealth tax for its top income earners and has begun opening international schools in Paris for expatriate children.²⁵⁷ The government has also started initiatives, such as the Join the Game campaign to attract UK-based tech companies to set up in France.²⁵⁸ France has one of the largest videogaming industries in the world with companies like Ubisoft, Gameloft, Arkane Studios and Bigben Interactive based in the country. In 2018, the total revenue of the videogames industry in France was \$5.5 billion.²⁵⁹ According to the French Directorate General for Enterprise, which is charging the Join the Game campaign, the videogaming industry is

²⁵⁶ "Brexit extension: what do British people in France need to do now?" *The Local France* (28 October 2019), <https://www.thelocal.fr/20191028/brexit-extension-what-do-british-people-in-france-need-to-do-now>.

²⁵⁷ "Domino effect: how a no-deal Brexit could affect all expats across Europe," *Dispatches Europe* (12 November 2019), <https://dispatcheseurope.com/domino-effect-how-a-no-deal-brexit-could-affect-all-expats-across-europe/>.

²⁵⁸ "Join the game: France makes new bid to woo British workers after Brexit," *The Local France* (4 July, 2019), <https://www.thelocal.fr/20190704/join-the-game-france-makes-new-bid-to-woo-british-workers-after-brexit>.

²⁵⁹ Sean Murray, "'Join the Game' campaign encourages UK developers to move to France in appeal to devs worried about Brexit," *The Gamer* (5 July 2019), <https://www.thegamer.com/join-the-game-move-france-brexit/>.

France's second largest cultural industry behind literature. It provides more than 5,000 jobs and is one sector of the French economy with great potential for growth.²⁶⁰

France's history as a leader in the videogaming industry means that Brexit presents its government with the opportunity to attract new companies and computer scientists. The Join the Game campaign promotes many benefits for qualifying UK tech companies to relocate to France. Such benefits include equity loan schemes that provide up to \$2.25 million in equity and corporate tax breaks of up to 30% of production expenses (up to a maximum of \$6.7 million). The French government has even set up a Video Games Support Fund (FAJV) that covers up to 50% of the budget to develop certain high-tech games.²⁶¹ Evidently, there are gains to be made if the French government can get videogame companies in the UK to relocate to France. A March 2017 survey by the Association for UK Interactive Entertainment (UKIE) showed that 57% of gaming companies in the UK employ EU citizens. Additionally, these EU citizens represent one-third of videogame industry workers in the UK. The survey also showed that over 40% of these companies were considering moving out of the UK.²⁶² Hence, France's Join the Game campaign and the potential economic gains it could bring through employing highly skilled workers currently in the UK confirm that the French government can capitalize on the uncertainty regarding freedom of movement of people caused by Brexit.

Paris: Europe's new financial center?

²⁶⁰ Alex Hern, "France makes a post-Brexit grab for UK's game developers," *The Guardian* (3 July 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2019/jul/03/france-makes-a-post-brexit-grab-for-uks-game-developers>.

²⁶¹ "Join the Game campaign," The Directorate General for Enterprise (DGE) of France, accessed 10 December, 2019, <https://jointhegame.fr/>.

²⁶² Jordan Erica Webber, "UK games industry: 40% of companies considering relocating after Brexit," *The Guardian* (30 March 2017), <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/mar/30/uk-games-companies-leaving-brexit-vote-eu-workers>.

London's development into one of the world's largest financial capital three decades ago has made the city integral to the functioning of Europe's financial system. Each day trillions of dollars worth of currency and derivatives are traded in London's financial district. In 2017, the UK accounted for 74% of interest rate derivatives and 78% of foreign exchange trading in Europe.²⁶³ And in 2018, the UK's financial services industry accounted for over 11% of all taxes paid in the country.²⁶⁴ The UK's departure from the EU will mark the end of the unfettered access to EU markets and infrastructure in the financial services sector in the UK.²⁶⁵ Regardless of a deal or no-deal Brexit, the UK's exclusion from the EU will make financial activities between the two entities more burdensome.

Similar to its efforts to attract skilled videogame developers from the UK, the French government has also tried to attract skilled workers in the financial services industry to relocate from the. After the 2016 Brexit referendum, the main lobbying arm of the French financial services sector, Paris Europlace, released a report comparing Paris, Amsterdam, and Frankfurt as potential financial centers to replace London. Unsurprisingly, the report concluded that Paris is the most attractive and ideal location for a new European financial center.²⁶⁶ French firms like PNB Paribas, Société Générale and Crédit Agricole are moving over 500 employees back from London to Paris. The Bank of America Merrill Lynch is also spending over \$400 million to

²⁶³ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," in *Complexity's Embrace: the international law implications of Brexit*, ed. Oonagh E. Fitzgerald and Eva Lein (United Kingdom: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 88.

²⁶⁴ Silla Brush and Alexander Weber, "London's fight to remain a financial hub after Brexit," *Bloomberg* (2 July 2019), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-07-03/london-s-fight-to-remain-a-financial-hub-after-brex-it-quicktake>.

²⁶⁵ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," 87.

²⁶⁶ "Brexit: la Place de Paris en pole position en Europe pour attirer les entreprises," Paris Europlace, last modified November, 29, 2016, <https://www.paris-europlace.com/fr/actualites/rapport-brex-it-la-place-de-paris-en-pole-position-en-europe-pour-attirer-les-entreprises>.

relocate its staff and headquarters from London to Paris.²⁶⁷ The bank announced the merging of its subsidiaries in Ireland and UK as well as the transfer of 125 jobs from London to Dublin, demonstrating its resolve to reduce financial activities and dependency on the UK. Additionally, a survey by the commercial bank Helaba found that 9 firms in the UK have confirmed their relocations to Paris.²⁶⁸ So, France can create more jobs after Brexit if its gains from relocation outweigh its losses from layoffs and unemployment.

However, Paris is not the only city financial firms in the UK can relocate to. Frankfurt is also a strategic location for these firms to move to because of its proximity to the European Central Bank. Furthermore, Frankfurt already houses over 150 international banks and has ranks 8th on the International Financial Centers Development Index.²⁶⁹ Germany's government has also tried to entice UK-based firms to move to Frankfurt with a "Fall in love with Frankfurt" campaign.²⁷⁰ Germany's campaign has led to the relocation of dozens of investment bankers from the American firms Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan Chase and Citigroup to Frankfurt. Together with the Swiss firm UBS, these banks have plans to move over \$280 billion worth of assets from London to Frankfurt in the next year. The earlier mentioned survey by commercial bank Helaba counted 25 financial institutions moving to Frankfurt.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Joe Sommerland and Ben Chapman, "Which companies are leaving UK, downsizing or cutting jobs ahead of Brexit?" *The Independent* (26 February 2019), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-companies-leaving-uk-list-job-cuts-eu-no-deal-customs-union-a8792296.html>.

²⁶⁸ "Which European city will benefit most from Brexit?" *Phaidon International* (2 May 2016), <https://www.phaidoninternational.com/industryinsights/which-european-city-will-benefit-most-from-brexit-92807113541>.

²⁶⁹ "Which European city will benefit most from Brexit?" *Phaidon International*.

²⁷⁰ Amie Tsang and Matthew Goldstein, "For Wall Street banks in London, it's moving time," *The New York Times* (17 February 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/17/business/brexit-banks-wall-street-london.html>.

²⁷¹ Sophia Akram, "Which city is winning the race to be Europe's next financial hub? None," *Ozy* (12 February 2019), <https://www.ozy.com/fast-forward/which-city-is-winning-the-race-to-be-europes-next-finance-hub-none/91755/>.

The Netherlands, too, have successfully attracted almost 100 companies to relocate from the UK. In August 2019, the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency announced that another 325 companies, particularly in the finance, information technology, media, life sciences and health industries, were considering moving to the Netherlands as a result of Brexit.²⁷² Among these companies include the Japanese tech firms Panasonic and Sony.²⁷³ The campaigns and programs led by France, Germany, the Netherlands and several other cities in Europe demonstrate these governments' awareness of potential gains in the financial sector after Brexit. Indeed, as the end of freedom of movement means the UK can no longer serve as Europe's financial center, cities like Paris are stepping up to entice those working in this sector in the UK to relocate. This shows how the French government is already acting to reap the advantages of the future end of free movement with the UK.

Additionally, according to Peihani, the free movement of financial services has 2 dimensions: freedom to provide services and freedom of establishment.²⁷⁴ These rights date back to the founding of the EU and the Treaty of Rome (1957) and are facilitated through the bloc's passporting regime. Passporting refers to a financial regime in which firms authorized to conduct financial activities in one EU member state are allowed to provide cross-border services or establish branches in other member states.²⁷⁵ These rights have allowed EU financial institutions, the majority with bases in the UK, to offer a wide range of financial services with few

²⁷² Anthony Deutsch and Toby Chopra, "Nearly 100 companies move to Netherlands ahead of Brexit – Dutch agency," *Thomson Reuters* (26 August 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-netherlands/nearly-100-companies-move-to-netherlands-ahead-of-brexit-dutch-agency-idUSKCN1VG0GH>.

²⁷³ Joe Sommerland and Ben Chapman, "Which companies are leaving UK, downsizing or cutting jobs ahead of Brexit?"

²⁷⁴ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," 90.

²⁷⁵ Allison McCann, Milan Schreuer and Amis Tsang, "Where Europe would be hurt most by a no-deal Brexit."

constraints. For instance, British banks have a key role in lending across the EU. Hence, Brexit means that borrowing loans from such banks could become costlier and therefore more limited because it will be more expensive to route through the UK without passporting abilities.²⁷⁶

Unfortunately, it is hard to calculate the precise economic costs of losing these rights due to the difficulty of isolating the many products and services traded between the two nations. The reason for this is that the uncertainty about how Brexit will proceed makes it difficult to quantify its impact on these different products and services. Nevertheless, it remains clear that the potential end of passporting rights will negatively impact the UK's and France's financial services by limiting the financial activities one country can perform in the other.

The Parisian real estate market

The Paris real estate sector, specifically luxury real estate, also stands to gain from Brexit. This sector saw slow growth between 2012 and 2017 under then President François Hollande. The super-tax of 75% on earnings over 1 million euros that Hollande imposed during his presidency drove away high earners from Paris and created an oversupply of luxury real estate.²⁷⁷ However, President Macron's election in 2017 marked a turnaround for Paris' luxury real estate market.²⁷⁸ Previously, French residents had to pay taxes on all assets valued over 1.3 million euros, including on items such as cars, jewelry and financial investments.²⁷⁹ In October

²⁷⁶ Allison McCann, Milan Schreuer and Amis Tsang, "Where Europe would be hurt most by a no-deal Brexit."

²⁷⁷ Richard Lough, "Sold! Paris luxury real estate shines as London suffers Brexit blues," *Thomson Reuters* (2 December 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-france-realestate/sold-paris-luxury-real-estate-shines-as-london-suffers-brexite-blues-idUSKBN1Y61HQ>.

²⁷⁸ Roxana Popescu, "House Hunting in... France," *The New York Times* (7 August 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/07/realestate/house-hunting-in-france.html?partner=IFTTT>.

²⁷⁹ Hugo Cox, "Paris property benefits from Brexit bounce," *The Financial Times* (7 November 2018), <https://www.ft.com/content/970dff4c-ddc9-11e8-b173-ebef6ab1374a>.

2017, Macron changed France's existing wealth tax to apply exclusively to property starting in 2018. Macron's tax reform has attracted an increasing number of high-earning French expatriates to return to France. This is especially true in the period after the 2016 Brexit referendum. Knight Frank found that the price of prime properties in Paris had risen 17.5% from the end of 2016 to the third quarter of 2018.²⁸⁰

The recovery of real estate prices in Paris and the appeal of Macron's tax reforms to high-income earners could bring more benefits to Paris' real estate market. In tandem with Brexit, these factors have led to an increasing number of French nationals returning to France from abroad. In 2018, Daniel Féau Auteuil, a French luxury realty company, recorded that, for sales between 2 and 4 million euros, 59% of its buyers who identified as non-French residents were French citizens. For sales above 4 million euros, 43% of non-resident buyers were actually French citizens.²⁸¹ The high number of French real estate buyers who do not currently reside in France is evidence of the growing number of French citizens returning to France. Thus, the high-end real estate market in Paris is likely to see growth with the return of French expatriates from

Additionally, Macron's policies have also attracted relocations of British citizens to France. Since the 2016 referendum, a growing number of British citizens have moved out of the UK for reasons such as job relocation or to acquire EU citizenship. In 2019, an estimated 84,000 British citizens moved to France and other EU countries compared to 59,000 people in 2008.²⁸² Following this trend, there has also been growth in the number of British nationals purchasing properties and relocating to Paris from the UK. Some of these Brits relocate because they

²⁸⁰ Hugo Cox, "Paris property benefits from Brexit bounce."

²⁸¹ "Paris luxury apartments selling in less than 48 hours," *Paris Property Group*.
<https://parispropertygroup.com/blog/2018/paris-luxury-apartments-selling-in-less-than-48-hours/>

²⁸² Hannah Evans, "Why more Brits are moving to France following the Brexit referendum," *Complete France* (2 January 2020), <https://www.completefrance.com/french-property/buying-property/why-more-brits-are-moving-to-france-after-brexit-1-6435600>.

anticipate a sharp fall of the pound against the euro after the UK's exit while others simply wish to escape the uncertainty of EU membership. Regardless of their reasons Paris, and France more generally, has become the favorite destination for British citizens leaving the UK because of Brexit.²⁸³ This is evident by data collected by Home Hunts, a French property agency which finds properties for affluent international clients, which received 342 inquiries from British clients for Parisian homes in the first half of 2018 in comparison to the 165 it received in the first half of 2017.²⁸⁴ Additionally, real estate in Paris appeals to high-income earners from London because it is comparatively more affordable. Prime property prices in Paris are about 19,000 euros per square meter compared to 28,000 euros in London.²⁸⁵ Thus, the real estate sector in Paris could benefit from rising prices and increased demand as more people relocate from the UK.

Cities like Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Paris that are trying to attract businesses and employees to relocate after Brexit have taken measures to ensure the ability of their own financial institutions and public infrastructure to bear their influx. This is evident, for example, by the expansion of the Paris metro system to cover a greater area around the city to prepare for a sudden rise in its number of users should Brexit cause the repatriation of French citizens from the UK.²⁸⁶ In Frankfurt, too, the local government has tried to accommodate new residents by constructing housing to accommodate up to 30,000 people. However, the investment management company Jones Lang LaSalle predicts housing prices could still rise by 10.7% because the influx of new residents is disproportionately made up of financiers and other high-

²⁸³ Hannah Evans, "Why more Brits are moving to France following the Brexit referendum."

²⁸⁴ Hugo Cox, "Paris property benefits from Brexit bounce,"

²⁸⁵ Richard Lough, "Sold! Paris luxury real estate shines as London suffers Brexit blues."

²⁸⁶ Viren Vaghela, "Paris international school may expand to admit more children of fleeing UK bankers," *Bloomberg* (10 October 2019), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-11/paris-school-ponders-brexite-growth-as-banker-parents-flee-london>.

income earners.²⁸⁷ Similarly, Paris' construction of 7 new skyscrapers in the La Défense business district to accommodate people moving from the UK will likely not stop the displacement of some low and middle-income people into the city's *banlieues* or suburbs.²⁸⁸ The problems faced by many *banlieues*, such as high crime rates and unemployment, have led the French media to demonize them for decades. Some *banlieues*, like the 93, are portrayed as "breeding grounds" for criminals and radical Islam.²⁸⁹ The increasing numbers of low and middle-income people forced into Paris' *banlieues* due to the city's unaffordable property prices could exacerbate the existing divisions between the residents of the city and its suburbs.²⁹⁰

As mentioned, one of the downsides of the relocations to Paris and elsewhere caused by Brexit is that most news arrivals are high-income earners who work in the financial sector.²⁹¹ The influx of this group is making life in Paris more expensive and pushing out low and middle-income residents out to the city's *banlieues*. Real estate prices in Paris have risen by over 250% in the last two decades and the return of wealthy French citizens, who lived in the UK, threatens to push prices up even higher.²⁹² Since February 2016, four months before the Brexit referendum, the number of French expatriates in the UK looking to return to France has increased by 30%.²⁹³ In fact, earlier this year the most expensive Paris apartment ever sold at 39

²⁸⁷ Sophia Akram, "Which city is winning the race to be Europe's next financial hub? None."

²⁸⁸ Sophia Akram, "Which city is winning the race to be Europe's next financial hub? None."

²⁸⁹ Michael-Oliver Harding, "Branded a no-go zone: a trip inside the 93, France's most notorious banlieue," *The Guardian* (4 April 2019), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/apr/04/photographer-banlieue-monsieur-bonheur-department-93-paris-france-fox-news-no-go-zone>.

²⁹⁰ Claire Mufson, "Rich and poor increasingly segregated in Paris region," *France 24* (3 June 2019), <https://www.france24.com/en/20190603-paris-france-rich-poor-segregate-housing-renting-gentrification-yellow-vest-money-income>.

²⁹¹ Mike Woods, "Brexit driving up property values in Paris," *Radio France Internationale* (7 March 2019), <http://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20190306-brexit-driving-property-values-paris>.

²⁹² Eleanor Beardsley, "Brexit among reasons for rising real estate prices in France," *National Public Radio* (11 November 2019), <https://www.npr.org/2019/11/11/778343732/brexit-among-reasons-for-rising-real-estate-prices-in-france>.

²⁹³ Mike Woods, "Brexit driving up property values in Paris."

million euros was bought by a French millionaire moving back from London.²⁹⁴ Although the actual number of returning French expats are actually only in the several dozen thus far, they pose a problem for the Paris housing market.

This is especially true because of the city's size and tight property development regulations. More specifically, Paris' property market sees about 50,000 transactions annually, with about 5% (2,000-3,000) of those transactions being over one million euros.²⁹⁵ If, for example, the Bank of America proceeds with its plans to relocate its European headquarters to Paris, their employees alone will create demand for 1000 apartments. Although not all of Bank of America's employees demand housing priced at over one million euros, their demand along with that created by employees of other large financial firms relocating to Paris could dramatically impact the prices of the city's property. It is important to keep in mind that Brexit cannot be seen as the only reason top-income earners are relocating back to France. Low interest rates, decreasing wealth taxes and the pro-business policies of President Macron also contribute to this influx.²⁹⁶ Regardless of its causes, however, the clear effects of these relocations are the increase of living costs in Paris and the movement of lower-income families out of the city and further into its suburbs.

The impact of end of free movement on undocumented people in France and the UK

Brexit will also affect the movement of immigrants in France, many of whom ultimately seek to reach the UK. This is most evident in the French border town of Calais, where goods between the UK and France cross borders. The port of Calais is the busiest port in the world in

²⁹⁴ "Domino effect: how a no-deal Brexit could affect all expats across Europe."

²⁹⁵ Mike Woods, "Brexit driving up property values in Paris."

²⁹⁶ Delphine Strauss, "France's richest gain most from Emmanuel Macron's tax reforms," *The Financial Times* (23 January 2019), <https://www.ft.com/content/728cc752-1e7e-11e9-b126-46fc3ad87c65>.

terms of passenger traffic and is one of the two main points of entry and exit (along with Dunkirk) for trade with the UK. Due to the business of this port and its proximity to the UK, many immigrants coming from all over Europe, the Middle East, and Africa come to Calais in hopes of reaching Britain. The reason they want to reach and apply for asylum in the UK instead of France is because the French government does little to rehabilitate, re-integrate and help these immigrants find work.²⁹⁷

The issue of mass migration was not pertinent when the UK and France signed the Touquet Accords in 2003.²⁹⁸ This agreement allowed for “juxtaposed controls” between the two nations. This meant that the UK could set up security checkpoints at Calais and Dunkirk, among other locations, and France could do their security checks in Dover and St. Pancras. Essentially, the agreement moved the British border to France and vice versa. Today this has become a problem as the migrant problem in Europe grows. France sees its responsibility for migrants that the UK does not want to accept as an unfair burden. This is especially true because the migrant flow is mainly going in one direction and the UK does not need to worry as much about migrants trying to enter France. Macron’s government has called for an end to the Touquet Accords and claims that France can no longer be the UK’s “coastguard” unless it receives concessions to help control the migrant crisis on their borders.²⁹⁹ Despite the UK pledging an increase of 44.5 million pounds in January 2018 to help with border control in France, contention over each country’s responsibility to accept and rehabilitate its fair share of migrants remains. Hence, the UK and

²⁹⁷ Pierre Lepidi, “‘We want to work:’ refugees tell France why UK is so attractive,” *The Guardian* (9 March 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/09/we-want-to-work-refugees-tell-france-why-uk-is-so-attractive>.

²⁹⁸ The Touquet Accords, U.K.-France, 8 August, 2003, <http://www.gdr-elsj.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/5.-accords-du-touquet.pdf>.

²⁹⁹ Joe Tambini, “Le Touquet Agreement: what is the Treaty of Touquet and what does deal mean for Britain?” *Daily Express* (18 January, 2018), <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/906732/Le-Touquet-agreement-what-is-treaty-mean-UK-France-immigration>.

France will need to re-negotiate the Touquet Accords to ease the political tension that exists at the borders of these two countries.

In either the case of a deal or no-deal Brexit, France and the UK will no longer enjoy the free movement between borders they currently do. In terms of the movement of people, Brexit will make the process of living in France and the UK more complicated for French and British citizens. This is because ending free movement with the EU was a major driving force of Brexit. Nevertheless, as this chapter has demonstrated, there are ways in which France can gain from the end of free movement with the UK. For instance, it can capitalize on the uncertainties that Brexit brings for videogame developers. Additionally, there are also benefits from the relocation of workers in the UK's financial sector whose companies are moving to Paris. The Parisian real estate market, especially that for luxury housing, may also see growth because of Brexit. However, the French government must be aware of the capacity of Paris to accommodate its growing influx of people. This is particularly true in the case of Paris' housing market that is becoming more unaffordable in part because of Brexit. This chapter also identified some of the measures taken by the French government to prepare for the predicted effects of the ending free movement with the UK. These measures demonstrate that, while a deal with the UK remains desirable, the French government is sufficiently preparing for the end of free movement in a no-deal Brexit.

Chapter 7: The impact of Brexit on free movement of goods and services between France and the UK

The free movement of goods among members of the European Economic Area (EEA) is facilitated by the creation of common external tariffs and the elimination of customs duties and technical barriers to trade, like quantitative restrictions.³⁰⁰ A study shows that EU membership increases trade by 20% in comparison to a bilateral trade agreement with the EU.³⁰¹ If Brexit proceeds without a deal or transition period, the UK must default to trading with the EU under regulations set by the World Trade Organization.³⁰² This means that certain goods imported from the UK into France and vice versa will face tariffs and other barriers, such as increased security and health checks, before entering the country. In this scenario, exporters from the EU27 and UK are expected to bear annual costs of about 37 billion euro and 32 billion euro respectively.³⁰³

This chapter examines the end of free movement of goods and services between France and the UK. It looks at which French industries will be impacted most by the UK's exit and also how France, in comparison to other EU nations, will be affected. Then, it highlights why small to medium-sized French enterprises are likely to be impacted most by Brexit. This is also the case for the French agriculture industry that exports large quantities of goods into the UK. In addition, the chapter looks at how the end of free movement could cause massive delays of perishable goods at the Calais border. It navigates the French government's efforts to mitigate these predicted effects as promising signs that France is preparing sufficiently for Brexit. Finally, the

³⁰⁰ Mariusz Maciejewski, Christina Ratcliff, and Andrea Dobrita, "Free movement of goods," *European Parliament* (April 2019), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/38/free-movement-of-goods>.

³⁰¹ Edgar Morgenroth, "Examining consequences for trade: integration and disintegration effects," in *The Political Economy of Brexit*, ed. David Bailey and Leslie Budd (London: Anthem Press, 2017), 27.

³⁰² Chris Morris, "Brexit: what is the 'no-deal' WTO option?" *BBC News* (29 July, 2019), <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-45112872>.

³⁰³ Oliver Wyman, "France's 'red tape' cost of Brexit," (London: Clifford Chance, 2018), 4.

chapter concludes with a synthesis of what the end of free movement would look like under different Brexit scenarios. It concludes by asserting that the UK can only achieve its objectives of ending free movement of people while retaining access to the European Single Market if it is willing to make potentially unpopular concessions to the EU. Thus, the end of free movement between France and the UK brings uncertainties about the future relationship between the two countries. This underlines the importance of ensuring an orderly Brexit with agreements that do not leave individuals and businesses in legal limbo.

French agriculture

Currently, the UK trades more with certain EU members than others. This means that the impact of Brexit on trade will not be equally spread across members.³⁰⁴ In the case of France, it is the UK's third largest merchandise and second largest services export market in the EU. And on the other hand, the UK is France's sixth largest merchandise and fifth largest services export market in the EU.³⁰⁵ Seeing as they are one of each other's main trading partners, import tariffs and barriers to entry for goods entering the UK is not desirable. There are many sectors of French business that have a long-enduring presence in the UK, such as wine, cheese, and the luxury consumer goods sector.³⁰⁶ Barriers to trade will decrease the UK's imports of French goods as they become costlier for British consumers. Also, should the British pound fall after Brexit, UK imports may become relatively less costly to France. If British imports were to

³⁰⁴ Edgar Morgenroth, "Examining consequences for trade: integration and disintegration effects," 27.

³⁰⁵ Edgar Morgenroth, "Examining consequences for trade: integration and disintegration effects," 28.

³⁰⁶ Vivien Pertusot, "France," in *Europe's Brexit: EU perspectives on Britain's vote to leave*, ed. Tim Oliver (London: Agenda Publishing), 59.

increase, this would be bad for France's balance of trade as the UK is the country with which France has the largest trade surplus (exceeding 10 billion euros).³⁰⁷

The agriculture sector in France is among those that will be most affected by Brexit. This is because France's geographic proximity to and history with the UK have made these countries close trading partners of agricultural goods. Indeed, Wyman estimates that French farmers and exporters of agricultural products must bear close to 900 million euro, or a quarter of Brexit's total costs to French companies.³⁰⁸ This is explained by France's position as a leading food and beverage exporter and also because these goods could face high tariffs to enter the UK post-Brexit. Furthermore, if non-tariff barriers were erected, these products may also need certification or security checks and face delays before entering the UK.

Fortunately, many of France's agricultural exports to the UK, such as wine, leather goods and champagne, have relatively low-price elasticities of demand. This means that their producers can pass on a relatively high proportion of the costs of barriers to entry onto the consumers. Hence, the demand for such French products is unlikely to face drastic changes even if they become more expensive for consumers in the UK. Nevertheless, it remains important to keep in mind the possibility that French products will also face greater competition from cheaper foreign substitutes. Boris Johnson's current agriculture bill does not make any commitments to uphold the same food safety and animal welfare standards as the EU.³⁰⁹ This means that French agricultural exports to the UK could be undercut by cheaper products from places with lower

³⁰⁷ Sebastian Seibt, "How Brexit will affect French industry," *France 24* (28 June, 2016), <https://www.france24.com/en/20160628-how-will-brexit-affect-french-industry>.

³⁰⁸ Oliver Wyman, "France's 'red tape' cost of Brexit," (London: Clifford Chance, 2018), 9.

³⁰⁹ Fiona Harvey, "Food security plan after Brexit: biggest shake-up to farming in 40 years," *The Guardian* (16 January 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jan/16/food-security-brexit-biggest-shake-uk-farming-40-years-agriculture-bill>.

food safety regulations such as Asia and the U.S. This means that, in any case, French producers of agricultural goods should make preparations to divert their exports to the UK elsewhere.

The Common Agricultural Policy

Under the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), French and British farmers receive benefits such as income support, subsidies and rural development.³¹⁰ The UK and France are both net contributors to the EU budget, of which 36.1% (58.4 billion euros) was spent on total CAP expenditure in 2019.³¹¹ However, because France has a relatively large agricultural sector in comparison to the UK, the French agricultural industry receives more than double the amount of funding given to the British agricultural industry. In 2014, despite being a net contributor, France was also the largest beneficiary of the CAP, with inflows of over 8.5 billion euros.³¹² In comparison, farmers in the UK received 3.1 billion euros in 2015. The CAP has been frequently criticized by British media and officials for, among other things, its misuse of subsidies to create surpluses of products like wine in the 1980s and environmental damage due to lack of land management.³¹³ This is why, under Prime Minister Johnson's current agriculture bill, the UK will depart the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and follow its own agricultural policy.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ "The common agricultural policy at a glance," *The European Commission*.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en.

³¹¹ Albert Massot, "Financing of the CAP," *European Parliament* (May 2019),

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/106/financing-of-the-cap>.

³¹² Alan Matthews, "Gainers and losers from the CAP budget," *CAP Reform* (17 November 2015),

<http://capreform.eu/gainers-and-losers-from-the-cap-budget/>.

³¹³ Richard Byrne, "The Common Agricultural Policy is dead: long live the BAP," *The London School of Economics Blogs* (21 March, 2018), <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2018/03/21/the-common-agricultural-policy-is-dead-long-live-the-bap/>.

³¹⁴ Judith Tsouvalis and Ruth Little, "The new agriculture bill could be 'one of the most significant pieces of legislation for farmers in England for over 70 years.' What does it mean?" *The Independent* (23

For France, the UK's departure from the CAP is a drawback. Brexit means that, when the UK stops its contributions, the EU's annual budget of about 165 billion euros in 2019 will face a shortfall of about 9.1 billion euros.³¹⁵ This leaves European leaders with the tough task of trying to finance more projects with fewer means.³¹⁶ In June 2018, the European Commission suggested reducing the CAP budget by about 5% in its 2020-2027 budget proposals as a result of the decreasing overall EU budget and need to finance more immediate projects.³¹⁷ A reduced CAP budget could mean stricter regulations on which EU farmers receive benefits and fewer benefits for French farmers overall. The proposal to cut the CAP budget has been called "unacceptable" by Stéphane Travert, France's Minister of Agriculture, and criticized by the Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles (the main agricultural trade union in France).³¹⁸ However, a reduced CAP budget is a situation France and the EU are accustomed to. The percentage of the EU's overall budget allocated to the CAP has been decreasing since the mid 1980s from about 73% in 1985 to 36.1% in 2019.³¹⁹ This has occurred partly due to the criticism the CAP has received from various stakeholders, including governments, environmentalists and economists. In any case, the further reduction of the CAP budget in the

January 2020), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/brexit-agricultural-bill-farm-environment-a9294421.html>.

³¹⁵ Silvia Amaro, "An unprecedented EU fight is coming over who will pay the UK's share of the budget after Brexit," *Consumer News and Business Channel* (30 October 2019), <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/30/brexit-europe-countries-may-have-to-pay-more-into-the-eu-budget.html>.

³¹⁶ Aline Robert, "Cuts in the CAP: unacceptable for France," *Euractiv* (2 May 2018), <https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/news/cuts-in-the-cap-unacceptable-for-france/>.

³¹⁷ Claire McCormack, "5% CAP cut is 'best possible proposal' – Brussels budget chief," *AgriLand Ireland* (25 June 2019), <https://www.agriland.ie/farming-news/5-cap-cut-is-best-possible-proposal-brussels-budget-chief/>.

³¹⁸ Aline Robert, "Cuts in the CAP: unacceptable for France."

³¹⁹ "Common Agricultural Policy: key graphs and figures," *European Commission* (July 2019), https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/food-farming-fisheries/farming/documents/cap-expenditure-graph1_en.pdf.

coming decade does not come as a surprise to French officials despite their public protests against it.

As explored, French agriculture may suffer as a consequence of Brexit because France is one of the UK's largest trading partners in this sector. Exporters of French agricultural products should anticipate changing demands for their products from the UK market and farmers should prepare to receive less aid through the CAP. Despite these drawbacks, however, the French agriculture industry will not experience chaos due to Brexit. As we have seen, this can in part be explained by the luxurious nature of many French exports and the resilience of French farmers who have experienced CAP budget cuts for many decades.

Small to medium sized French enterprises

Size is a major determinant of a company's ability to adapt to the regulatory complexities and expenses caused by Brexit. Those French companies that need to be most prepared for Brexit are small to medium-sized enterprises that trade regularly with the UK. SMEs have fewer resources to deal with the added administrative work associated with Brexit than large multinational corporations that often already conduct business outside the EU. SMEs generally also have less experience exporting outside of the EU and are therefore less accustomed to trading with customs and regulatory barriers.³²⁰ The costs of redirecting a company's exports to the UK elsewhere and out of the EU may prove to be significant for certain companies.

According to an October 2019 survey by the French Ministry of Finance, less than half of 3,000 of these companies surveyed have conducted impact assessments of Brexit on their

³²⁰ Oliver Wyman, "France's 'red tape' cost of Brexit," (London: Clifford Chance, 2018), 12.

businesses.³²¹ Only 40% of companies said they have studied potential consequences of Brexit on their future business activities and only 6% have gathered precise calculations. 53% of these companies even agreed that they were poorly prepared for Brexit.³²² Many of these companies must plan to divert exports away from the UK and to other member states especially if trade barriers are erected.

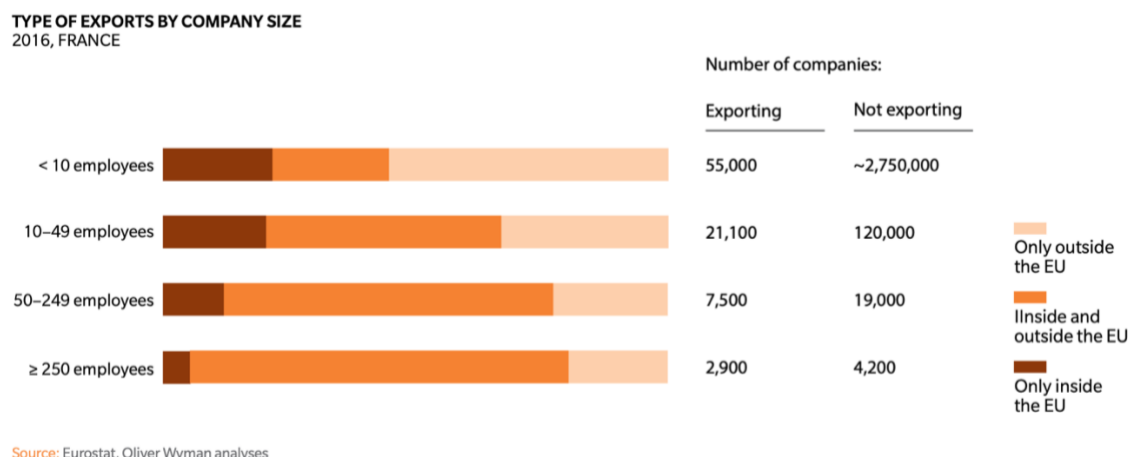


Exhibit 1: Breakdown of exporting companies by export destination and company size³²³

On the bright side, as demonstrated by Exhibit 1, the proportion of French SMEs that export only to the EU is relatively low. For instance, only 20-25% of French SMEs export only to the EU compared to the 40-70% of British and German SMEs.³²⁴ Nevertheless, 15-20% of French SMEs still amount to nearly 20,000 actual firms that have never dealt with business outside the EU market. These are the firms that may face the most difficulties managing any new trade barriers that arise from Brexit. Hence, because a disorderly Brexit could erode the frictionless

³²¹ Marine Pennetier and Maya Nikolaeva, “French SMEs that do business with UK poorly prepared for Brexit,” *Thomson Reuters* (20 October 2019), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-france/french-smes-that-do-business-with-uk-poorly-prepared-for-brexit-idUSKBN1WZ0CX>.

³²² Marine Pennetier and Maya Nikolaeva, “French SMEs that do business with UK poorly prepared for Brexit.”

³²³ Oliver Wyman, “France’s ‘red tape’ cost of Brexit,” (London: Clifford Chance, 2018), 11.

³²⁴ Oliver Wyman, “France’s ‘red tape’ cost of Brexit,” (London: Clifford Chance, 2018), 11.

trade between the EU and the UK, French SMEs trading with the UK must conduct impact assessments and begin searching for new markets to divert their UK-bound exports towards.

The Calais border

Barriers to the free movement of goods will also create delays at the borders of France and the UK. Over 2 million trucks cross the English Channel on ferries and another 2 million trucks cross by train on the Channel Tunnel. Altogether, more than 250 billion euros worth of goods are exchanged between the two nations annually, meaning Brexit could spell disaster for the day-to-day running of Europe's busiest trading corridor.³²⁵ Just a 2-minute check per vehicle could lead to queues of lorries over 15 miles long.³²⁶ A leaked French government study predicts that, in the worst-case scenario, the Calais border will face delays of up to 2 days on basic goods, including bread, fuel, and pharmaceuticals, all of which they import mostly from the UK. In the best-case scenario, 50% of vehicles coming through Calais will attain permission to cross the border after at least 8 hours wait.³²⁷ This is problematic as there are many perishable goods that are traded between the UK and France. With delays, these goods may become unusable.

Indeed, it is the speed of the current crossing between British and French borders that facilitates the daily trade of fresh food, pharmaceuticals, flowers and other perishable imports. This speed is also integral for both British and French auto industries that operate with a 'just in time,' as opposed to a 'just in case,' inventory. French and British auto industries are reliant on

³²⁵ Eleanor Beardsley, "How Brexit could affect the free movement of goods between UK and France," *National Public Radio* (25 May 2018), <https://www.npr.org/2018/05/25/614518630/how-brexit-could-affect-the-free-movement-of-goods-between-u-k-and-france>.

³²⁶ Eleanor Beardsley, "How Brexit could affect the free movement of goods between UK and France."

³²⁷ Adam Payne, "Leaked no-deal Brexit report warns of delays of up to 2 days and an 8,000 vehicle queue at the border," *Business Insider* (2 September, 2019), <https://www.businessinsider.com/report-no-deal-brexit-risks-eight-thousand-vehicle-pile-up-at-the-border-2019-9>.

vehicle components arriving at a store or factory quickly and only when they are needed. Hence, fluidity at the border is imperative.

Fortunately, France is already mitigating the potential effects of end of free movement with the UK by training hundreds more border control workers and practicing Brexit scenarios at the Calais border.³²⁸ Privately owned French companies like PSA, which owns the car manufacturing company Vauxhall, and Airbus are also preparing to move their production away from the UK and back into the EU.³²⁹ Even potato farmers in France are reducing the acreage they devote to grow varieties preferred by buyers in the UK.³³⁰ These measures of preparation are strategic and demonstrate France's awareness of another problem that may arise with the end of free movement of goods in the UK. As European exporters to the UK look for substitution markets for their goods, they will face competition from their EU neighbors who are trying to do the same. This could create a more competitive market for goods which France and other EU countries produce for the UK, such as wine and cheese. Thus, it is promising to see France already diversifying its production to create goods that will be in high demand in other EU countries.

The end of free movement under different Brexit scenarios

³²⁸ Clémentine Maligorne, "Comment la France se prepare à une Brexit dur?" *Le Figaro* (18 January, 2019), <http://www.lefigaro.fr/conjoncture/2019/01/16/20002-20190116ARTFIG00150-comment-la-france-se-prepare-a-un-brexit-dur.php>.

³²⁹ Ania Nussbaum, "Brexit: Vauxhall owner PSA considering closing UK car plant after Britain leaves EU," *The Independent* (16 November, 2018), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/brexit-vauxhall-closing-car-plant-psa-peugeot-business-stockpiling-eu-a8636531.html>.

³³⁰ Ania Nussbaum, "French businesses wake up to the reality of a no-deal Brexit," *Bloomberg* (29 August, 2019), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-08-30/french-businesses-waking-up-to-the-reality-of-a-no-deal-brexit>.

As it stands the Brexit deadline is now 31 January 2020. The British government has two options should it wish to negotiate an agreement to continue freedom of movement with the EU to a certain extent. The government can either request for the UK to be a part of the European Economic Area (EEA) or create a personalized bilateral agreement with the EU.³³¹ The agreements of the EEA grant its signatories essentially the same free access to the European single market and the four freedoms of movement (of goods, services, capital and labor) as the EU. But as the EEA is not a customs union it does not mandate a common trade, agriculture, fisheries or foreign policy. Remaining in the EEA is the least disruptive option for both citizens of France and the UK who are affected by Brexit and for businesses that trade between the two countries. It would permit the relatively smooth continuation of business activity between the EU and UK in comparison to a no-deal Brexit. However, remaining in the EEA could be a political challenge because regaining national sovereignty through controlling immigration and decreasing the powers of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) were primary objectives of the Brexit leave campaign.³³² This option is also limited by the fact that the UK must continue its contributions toward the EU budget while giving up its influence over the rule-making process of EEA regulations. This is because EEA regulations are decided on the EU-level and imposed upon members of the EEA. Hence, the option of remaining in the EEA will neither satisfy British Leavers nor be popular with the public.

To maximize its own objectives, the British government would be wise to seek a bespoke agreement with the EU similar to that of Switzerland or Turkey. The UK may, for instance, agree on a deal to manage the movement of goods similar to the EU-Turkey Customs Union. This

³³¹ Maziar Peihani, “Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios,” 94.

³³² Maziar Peihani, “Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios,” 88.

agreement between Turkey and the EU Customs Union keeps the level of tariffs on goods equal among all participants, but it does not give Turkish goods the same free and easy access into EU markets that members of the EUCU receive. As goods being traded still need to adhere to the EU's product and safety standards, Turkish goods often face delays before being received because they need to be checked by border patrol officials before being permitted to enter the EU.³³³ The UK may also achieve its objectives of ending its free trade agreement with the EU while continuing to maintain an "EEA-type access" to the Single Market.³³⁴ Additionally, it could seek continued equivalence of regulatory and legal regimes either with the EU or with individual member states. However, in this case, it is very likely the UK must offer something back to the EU. For instance, Switzerland accepts freedom of movement with the EU in return for partial access to the European Single Market³³⁵. It is unlikely that the EU will make these concessions for the UK unless it receives something in return, especially in light of its tough stance in the ongoing Brexit negotiations. Fortunately, the governments of the UK and EU members are cognizant of the high economic costs of a no-deal Brexit.³³⁶ Thus, the UK will need to make concessions to the EU if it wishes to maintain the benefits of being a member of the European Single Market. Ideally the British government will moderate its stance on the need to abolish free movement. This would then allow for more practical solutions that minimize economic costs for businesses as well as individuals affected by Brexit.

³³³ Ceylan Yeginsu, "A Customs Union for Britain: How One Brexit Idea Might Work," *The New York Times* (1 April, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/world/europe/customs-union-brexit.html>.

³³⁴ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," 93.

³³⁵ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," 101.

³³⁶ Maziar Peihani, "Brexit and financial services: navigating through the complexity of exit scenarios," 103.

As explored, in terms of goods and services, Brexit will complicate the future trade relations between France and the UK. This is because, as a member of the EU Customs Union (EUCU), France cannot negotiate its trade policy with third parties independently from other member states; members of any customs union must share common external tariffs. Thus, regardless of what future deal the UK strikes with the EU to manage the movement of goods and services, trade between France and the EU will not be as frictionless as before Brexit. This chapter has also demonstrated how it remains desirable for the UK and EU to strike agreements that clear up any ambiguities for individuals and businesses who are impacted by the end of free movement. Nevertheless, due to the continuing uncertainty of Brexit, it remains necessary for people and businesses who are impacted to conduct impact assessments to better prepare for the worst-case scenario, which is a no-deal. This is particularly true for certain groups of people and businesses, such as SMEs and those who may not qualify for the UK's or France's settlement schemes.

Conclusion

The previous chapters have examined the extent of damages caused by Brexit to French security and defense, attitudes toward the EU and freedom of movement. Before the 2016 Brexit referendum in the UK, the French government strongly resisted the UK's departure from the EU. As a historic leader of the European integration process, the French government worried that Brexit would embolden Eurosceptics in France and undermine the country's support for the EU. Furthermore, French leaders understood that Brexit threatened both the unity and continuity of the bloc. This threat and the potentially damaging effects of Brexit on the French economy and defense capabilities also help explain why French officials agreed to take a hardline and uncompromising stance with the EU27 during the Brexit negotiations. The Brexit-related worries of the French and other EU governments stemmed from fears that the UK's departure could threaten the EU's stability by mobilizing Eurosceptic voters in individual member states. These officials also worried about the EU's shared economy and defense capabilities. There was a possibility that the EU's overall capabilities in these sectors could be reduced without continued British contributions. However, upon evaluating the actual impact of Brexit on France more than three years after the UK's decision to leave, it becomes evident that some of the French government's initial worries were indeed overstated.

In retrospect, many of the expected economic and security consequences of the UK's departure were exaggerated by the French government and media. This thesis has demonstrated that Brexit most likely will be neither a detriment to the French economy nor its individual defense capabilities. While the French economy will face short term problems, like shortages and delayed shipments, these problems are likely to be temporary and reparable. French officials and businesses are already preparing for these scenarios by implementing measures like training

more border patrol workers on the Calais border and diversifying production. These actions hint at France's readiness to deal with the impact of Brexit on its economy. Additionally, it is likely the UK will continue to participate in EU defense even after Brexit. This can be explained by the UK's history of leading EU defense initiatives and also because continued participation in this effort remains in this country's national interest. Hence, although Brexit has delayed the advancement of EU defense operations by taking up a large part of the EU's agenda, it is possible that the trajectory of EU defense will resume the direction it was taking prior to the UK's decision to leave.

The end of free movement between the UK and EU complicates the movement of French people and goods. Trade between France and the UK will not be as frictionless as before Brexit. Fortunately, despite this complication, there is desire from both French and British governments to maintain their existing bilateral relationship. France and the UK have a decades-long friendship, which has created a history of successful economic and military cooperation. As a result of this history as well as their similar cultures, it is unlikely that trade and travel between these two countries will be severely hampered because of Brexit. Furthermore, French officials have implemented various programs to help its people and businesses adapt to Brexit. Chapters 6 and 7 covered some of these measures including Settlement Schemes for people and financial incentives for businesses relocating to France. These chapters also highlight how some French citizens and industries may even benefit from losing the freedom to work and/ or be situated in the UK. For instance, the French financial and videogaming industries could grow as firms previously located in the UK move their offices to the European continent. Hence, although the end of free labor movement will make trading and moving into the UK more difficult for French citizens, it does not completely undo existing Anglo-French relations.

The UK's unprecedented departure threatened to undermine the French government's pro-European agenda. However, Brexit has not greatly diminished public support for the integration project in France. In light of this, it is unlikely that a "domino-effect," which involves French citizens voting to take their nation out of the EU, will occur. Instead, what is at stake for the French government as a result of Brexit is the continuation of the European integration project. Although the chaos of the Brexit negotiations may have put off French Eurosceptics like Marine Le Pen and her supporters from demanding a Frexit, proceeding with European integration will still be a challenge for the French government. In fact, Brexit could even make it more difficult for the EU to continue integrating. This is because what Eurosceptics, including those in France, now seek is to transform the EU from within. These critics want EU member states to be allowed to choose which EU initiatives they want to participate in. These current demands are just as threatening as demands to take a member state out of the EU entirely because any change which allows member states to pick and choose would essentially undermine the EU's basic principles. The EU would not function as it does if member states had the opportunity to join only those EU initiatives that benefitted them.

Fortunately, Macron's government has proven its determination to move forward with European integration despite Brexit. What remains uncertain is whether the French public will also continue to support this ambition. The findings in Chapter 4 highlight how French public attitudes toward the EU remain divided, even though the nation's overall sentiment toward the EU has improved since the 2016 Brexit referendum. However, it is important to remember that this is not the first time the French public has witnessed this split. Despite French citizens being as divided in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty referendum and 2005 Referendum on EU Constitution, the nation ultimately proceeded with integration. Hence, these previous experiences exemplify

that substantial divisions in public opinion over the EU did not stop the French government from pursuing a pro-EU agenda.

This thesis is limited by the fact that it is based on the French government's view of Brexit as a negative phenomenon. However, it is important to recognize that not all French citizens share this viewpoint. There are many Eurosceptic French citizens who perceived the UK's exit as a net positive. To some, Brexit was a confirmation of the EU's ineffectiveness and the beginning of its unravelling. In order to get a clearer idea of whether the French government's initial Brexit-related fears were valid and widely shared, it could be valuable to look at the impact of Brexit from the perspective of those Eurosceptics. Comparing the potential and actual benefits that French Eurosceptics predicted would result from Brexit to the potential and actual drawbacks predicted by the government is a place to start. Additionally, it would also be useful to study how Brexit impacted public attitudes toward the EU in other remaining member states. These studies would be necessary to judge the future survival of the bloc because the EU's survival depends on the constant support of its members. Although the French government continues to support the bloc, it cannot force the EU to proceed with its integration project unless this plan is unanimously supported by all its members.

There is one more limitation of this study that needs acknowledgement. Although the UK formally exited the EU and its political institutions in January 2020, it still remains in the EU's customs union and single market. This means that the UK's trade continues to be bound by EU rules. The UK can only stop participating in the single market if a trade agreement with the EU is ratified before January 2021. This suggests that it may be too soon to make a complete evaluation of the extent of damages inflicted onto France and the other EU27 by Brexit. Indeed, the UK and EU are still in the process of discussing many particularities of their future

relationship and will need to implement any changes gradually. Thus, a re-evaluation of the implications of Brexit for France would be useful in a few years with greater hindsight.

Brexit plays a transformative role in the development of the EU. The UK's departure could still ultimately lead to the reconfiguration or even unravelling of the bloc. However, the threats that Brexit poses to European integration and the EU's survival can be overcome through institutionally reforming the EU. Although Brexit threatens to halt the process of European integration, any predictions about a crisis appear to be more applicable to the UK than the EU. The EU can continue to proceed with integration if it can first restore the balance of power between Brussels and each individual EU member state by allowing national governments to decide on certain policies. The scholar Shahroo Malik is persuasive in arguing that the concept of the nation-state is "here to stay."³³⁷ EU leaders must accept that policies implemented on a national level by locally elected politicians possess more democratic legitimacy than those implemented on a European level by technocrats in Brussels. Therefore, the continuation of integration depends on whether the EU can give its members greater degree of individual freedom and flexibility over its EU obligations.

Clarifying the validity of the French government's Brexit-related worries is valuable because it emphasizes France and the EU's ability to cope with the consequences of Brexit. This thesis elucidated some of the ways the UK's decision to leave affects one of its closest trading partners and one of the EU's largest remaining member states. In doing so, it underlines the need for the French government to proceed in the ongoing Brexit negotiations with caution but without anxiety. By demonstrating the resilience of the French government, people and economy in the

³³⁷ Shahroo Malik, "Post-Brexit scenario" *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 4 (2018): 107, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/48544279>.

face of Brexit, it has become clear that this country is capable of dealing with the (fewer than expected) negative repercussions of the UK's exit.

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